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# THE STORY OF BRITAIN

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VOLUME III  
FROM 1714 TO 1942

BY  
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## PREFACE

THE third and last volume of *The Story of Britain* covers the main features of British History, in their European setting, from 1714 to 1942.

As in earlier volumes, the subject-matter has been broadened to include much besides the merely political and military events. While these receive ample treatment, room has also been found for other elements in our national history: for economic and social developments, for the main outlines of Empire history, for literature, religion, science, and art.

Reasons of space, together with the consideration that at this stage many pupils are provided with a separate European history book, have prevented the inclusion of separate chapters on European history as in previous volumes. Instead a brief summary of the European background has been placed before each of the first four parts of the book, thus providing a preliminary view of the four fairly well defined periods into which the European setting can be divided: namely, the Eighteenth Century, the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Era, the Age of Unifications, and the Armed Camps before 1914. In addition, frequent reference has been made throughout the text to European events whenever they affect British history.

In this as in the other volumes, there are numerous maps and illustrations, together with questions and exercises to test the pupil's reading. The subject-matter has been made sufficiently full to meet the requirements of the School Certificate Examinations of the various universities. Although, moreover, the book is not specifically an Economic History, its generous treatment of economic and social matters will be found to cover much of the subject-matter required by those universities with a special Economic History syllabus.

The story has been continued to the present day to dispel the common feeling that history always ends in a *cul-de-sac* and also to explain in outline the events leading to the Second World



War. This has involved, in a volume of this size and scope, much compression of certain topics in the final chapters, with the obvious dangers of oversimplification and of partiality in the selection of facts. The author has, however, attempted as fair-minded a picture of the between-war years as space has permitted, hoping at any rate that where it provokes thought or even disagreement it will lead to a search for more facts and to a further pondering over their real significance.

With the conclusion of this history I should like to express my thanks to Miss E. Withall, who, amid the many difficulties of life in war-time London, has carried on cheerfully and promptly with the task of typing all three volumes.

H. A. C.

November, 1942

*The quotation on p. 297 from H. M. Tomlinson's "All our Yesterdays" is reproduced by kind permission of Messrs William Heinemann, Ltd.*

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# THE STORY OF BRITAIN

## PART I

### WINNING AND LOSING AN EMPIRE

(1714-1783)

#### INTRODUCTION

#### **The European Background (1714-1789)**

A NEW age in European history was opened by the Treaty of Utrecht (1713), the Hanoverian succession in Britain (1714), and the death of Louis XIV of France (1715). It ended with the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789. Among the characteristics of the age the following may be noted:

(1) A belief in benevolent despotism, which meant that the ruler, although possessing unchecked power, was expected to govern in the interests of his subjects. In reality, however, the benevolent despots did little to improve the conditions of their people. In Britain George III to some extent tried to model himself upon the benevolent despots of the Continent.

(2) A decline in religious faith and a strong belief in the power of human reason. This showed itself in a lowering of the moral tone and in unscrupulousness and lack of faith in international dealings. It had, however, the good result of promoting a greater degree of religious toleration. The English Church suffered in the general decline till the Methodist revival did something to improve it.

(3) A growth of cosmopolitanism or internationalism which enabled French philosophers to visit England and admire her constitution, and led benevolent despots like Frederick the Great of Prussia and Catherine the Great of Russia to welcome foreign visitors to their courts.

(4) In the realm of international politics the power of France declined. She lost most of her overseas empire to Britain and



her finances were brought to the verge of bankruptcy by extravagant kings and idle nobles. Germany was still divided into over 350 states bound loosely together in the Holy Roman Empire. The Emperor was elected by the Electors, of whom the ruler of Hanover was one. The two chief German states were Austria and Prussia. They were bitter rivals, and when Charles VI of Austria died in 1740 the Prussian king, Frederick the Great, seized the Austrian province of Silesia from his daughter, Maria Theresa. In the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748) and the Seven Years' War (1756-1763) Maria Theresa made unsuccessful attempts to regain Silesia. In eastern Europe Russia was fast expanding towards the Baltic and the Black Seas under Peter the Great (died 1725) and Catherine the Great (1762-1796). In 1774 the Treaty of Kutchuk Kainardji gave Russia the right of protecting the Christian subjects of the Sultan. Russia, Prussia, and Austria were also jointly responsible for wiping Poland off the map of Europe by three partitions in 1772, 1793, and 1795. The Younger Pitt was the first British statesman to realize the danger to British interests arising from this Russian expansion, and in 1788 he formed a Triple Alliance against her.



## CHAPTER I

### THE AGE OF WALPOLE

#### **The Hanoverian Succession** ✓

THE death of Queen Anne in 1714 brought to the throne of Britain George, the Elector of Hanover. This was the result of the Act of Settlement, 1701, which had laid down that the crown should pass to a German Protestant family rather than revert to the Catholic descendants of James II. The Tory statesman, Henry St John, Viscount Bolingbroke, was, at the time of Queen Anne's death, plotting to restore the Stuarts, but events moved too quickly for him, and the Whigs were able to secure the succession of their German nominee.

The new King was already well over fifty and a grandfather—too old to change the habits of a lifetime. For the rest of his life (he lived until 1727) he held Hanover in greater affection than England, and often returned to his beloved electorate. His character was not such as to win the love or even respect of his new subjects. "In private life," a contemporary writes, "he would have been called an honest blockhead." He was dull; he had quarrelled with his wife, whom he left behind him imprisoned in Hanover; and he regarded his new kingdom merely as a useful addition to his German electorate. Even more than the Dutch William III, George I was a monarch of convenience, and his accession dispelled for ever any lingering notions of Divine Right.

Important results followed this change of dynasty. As the King knew no English and took little interest in English affairs, he left the work of government almost entirely in the hands of his ministers. Unlike William III and Anne, George I did not attend Cabinet meetings. Consequently the ministers grew more powerful, and in course of time it became customary for the most important minister to act as chairman at Cabinet meetings. In this way the position of Prime Minister developed; but it was a very gradual growth and so little understood at the



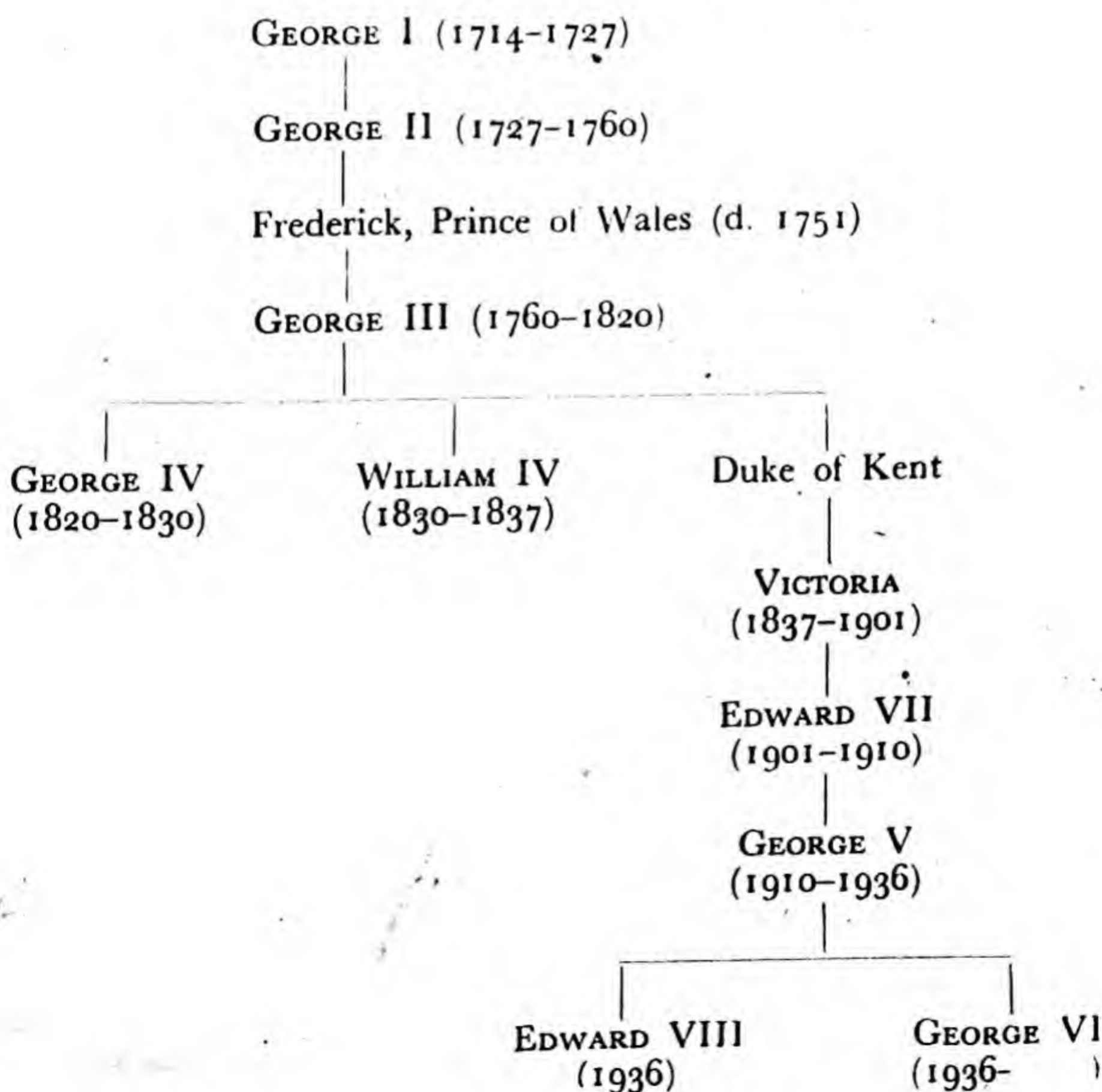
time that for long ministers denied that they were first or 'prime' ministers, and of course there was no regular office bearing that title. The leading minister of the Crown usually held the office of First Lord of the Treasury.

If George I was interested in his new kingdom it was because he hoped to use it to further the interests of Hanover. Englishmen were naturally suspicious of such designs and endeavoured to check them. None the less, after 1714 Britain and Hanover were more closely linked together, and, although it is impossible to estimate the exact extent, Britain took a greater interest than hitherto in German affairs.

Finally the Hanoverian succession ushered in a period of Whig rule which lasted for fifty years.

### THE HOUSE OF HANOVER

(after 1917 HOUSE OF WINDSOR)





**Whig Rule (1714-1760)**

Under the first two Hanoverians the Whigs enjoyed an unbroken spell of power. True, they had their own internal factions, which schemed and struggled against one another and made and unmade governments, but they were successful in keeping the Tories out of office altogether.

The first two Georges gave their confidence to the Whigs because they realized that the Whigs were their supporters whereas the Tories were often Jacobites in deed or sympathy. Bolingbroke and other leading Tories deemed it safer to escape abroad after the failure of their plot in 1714. Nor was royal support the only prop to the long Whig rule. Whig peers were in a majority in the House of Lords, and by virtue of their landed possessions were often able to control elections to the House of Commons.

The British Parliamentary system of the eighteenth century was far from democratic. Voting was restricted, Parliamentary boroughs were often extremely small, and influence and corruption were rife. The so-called 'rotten' boroughs had once been places of importance but had since decayed; 'pocket' boroughs were those under the control of the landowner. The Whigs took full advantage of this state of affairs, and also of the fact that once they were in office there were plenty of means of keeping themselves there. The government had immense powers of patronage at its disposal in the way of pensions, places, and sinecures (*i.e.* positions with little to do and plenty of pay), as well as the royal patronage of appointing men to high offices in the Church, army, and navy. By these means the Whigs were able to influence Parliament and reward their followers. No wonder that Disraeli compared the eighteenth-century Whigs to the 'Venetian oligarchy' which centuries before had reduced the republican government of Venice to a state of self-seeking corruption.

The Whig outlook fitted in well with the temper of the age. In religion the Whigs were broad-minded and tolerant even to the point of slackness, and they, rather than the High Church



Tories, were favoured by the growing body of Nonconformists who were particularly strong in the towns. The Whigs repealed the Schism Act and the Act against Occasional Conformity which had been passed by the Tories of Anne's reign against Nonconformist schoolmasters and office-holders. The commercial classes in general supported the 'safe' Whig party which stood as a guarantee of public credit and a bulwark against unsettling dynastic changes.

The four leading Whigs in 1714 were Lords Stanhope, Sunderland, and Townshend, and Sir Robert Walpole. In 1717 Townshend and Walpole accused their colleagues of subordinating British to Hanoverian interests and resigned from office.

### **The 'Fifteen'**

In 1715 the Jacobites raised a revolt on behalf of James Edward, son of James II, and known to history as the Old Pretender. There were two centres of revolt, Scotland and the north of England. In Scotland the leader was the Earl of Mar (nicknamed 'Bobbing John' on account of his frequent changes of party), and he was soon joined by many discontented Highland chiefs anxious to strike a blow for Scottish independence and for the Scottish house of Stuart. He was opposed by the Presbyterian Duke of Argyll and the Campbells. At Sheriffmuir a drawn battle was fought, but as Mar afterwards retreated he really confessed his failure. On the same day the English rebels under a member of Parliament named Forster and the Catholic Lord Derwentwater were surrounded and forced to surrender at Preston. Three months later the Old Pretender himself landed in Scotland, but he had not the necessary spirit or personal appeal to revive the dying embers of revolt.

Apart from incompetent leadership and lack of co-ordination among the rebels, the rising failed because the Old Pretender refused to renounce his Catholic faith, because the Regent Orleans in France wished to keep on good terms with England and sent no help for the rebels, and because the English business



community feared that a Stuart king might repudiate the National Debt. Not till 1745 did the Jacobites stage another serious rising; meanwhile they had to content themselves with such harmless gestures as passing their wine-glasses across their finger-bowls to denote it was 'the king over the water' whose health they were drinking.

The Whigs executed a few of the ringleaders and constructed some military roads through the Highlands. They passed an act to disarm the Scottish clans, but this was largely disobeyed, so that the clan system, which had helped the rebels, continued. Two other important acts were passed. The Riot Act, 1715, empowered a magistrate to disperse a meeting if he considered it likely to become riotous; this act is still in force. The Septennial Act, 1716, extended the length of Parliament from three to seven years. The Whigs thereby bolstered up their own power and avoided the dangers that might have arisen from too frequent elections; but they were bitterly attacked by their enemies for making the act apply to the very Parliament that had been elected in 1714 for three years. The Septennial Act lasted till 1911, when the Parliament Act reduced the length of Parliament to five years.

### **The South Sea Bubble (1719-1720)**

The Whig government of Sunderland and Stanhope (from which Townshend and Walpole had resigned in 1717) came to a tragic end through the events connected with the South Sea Bubble.

The South Sea Company had been founded in 1711 to develop the trade of the 'South Seas,' by which was meant the South Pacific and the South Atlantic Oceans. It was a joint-stock company, which meant that its capital was provided by shareholders who were entitled to a share in the profits of the company—or in its losses! In 1713 it was granted the rights obtained by Britain under the *Asiento* clause of the Treaty of Utrecht. This allowed Britain to send one ship a year to Porto Bello in Spanish South America and to supply the Spanish colonies with African negro slaves.



The company was soon making large profits which sent up the value of its shares. In 1719 it made the government an attractive offer concerning the National Debt. This debt had arisen from the borrowings which the government had made whenever its enterprises—in this case usually wars—were too expensive to be paid for out of taxation. The company offered to buy out the government's creditors by giving them either cash or its equivalent value in South Sea Company shares, and then to lend the government an equivalent amount out of its own funds. The directors of the company, realizing the enormous advertisement which such a transaction would provide, proposed to pay the government £7,500,000 and to accept a lower rate of interest on whatever they lent the nation. The government accepted the offer, and, as the directors had anticipated, the value of the company's shares immediately rose. A get-rich-quick public scrambled for shares in a company which, it was thought, must be making fabulous profits to be able to lend such enormous sums. Very soon a £100 share was fetching £1,060.

"Why not float other companies?" many unscrupulous financiers asked themselves when they saw a credulous public scrambling for shares. Companies sprang up like mushrooms, many of them purely fraudulent, such as that for obtaining gold from sea-water, or that "for carrying on an undertaking, nobody to know what it is." The Tory writer, Dean Swift, later satirized this crazy outburst of speculation in *Gulliver's Travels*, where he mentions schemes for extracting sunbeams from cucumbers and for building houses from the roof downward.

The South Sea Company, realizing its own danger from these 'bubble' companies, decided to prosecute them for fraud. Confidence soon went, even in the South Sea Company itself. Everyone hastened to sell the inflated shares, which, like burst bubbles, just collapsed. Thousands were ruined, and public anger was vented upon the government, some of whom had been guilty of accepting bribes. Sunderland retired, Stanhope died of a fit, and a third member committed suicide. A new



government was formed by Sir Robert Walpole, who had throughout opposed the transference of the National Debt, but had been astute enough, once the transaction had been effected, to make a fortune by buying South Sea stock at a low price and selling out at a high one before the bubble burst. Walpole put the National Debt on its old footing and confiscated some of the directors' fortunes to help re-imburse the shareholders. None the less, many were ruined.

### **Sir Robert Walpole**

The new minister was a Norfolk squire, so interested in his estate that he is said always to have opened the letters from his gamekeeper before his official correspondence. He had been educated at Eton and at King's College, Cambridge, and had made his mark as a Whig leader under Queen Anne. After the Tories gained control in 1710 he lost his office and for a time was imprisoned in the Tower on charges of corruption. With the death of Anne the tables were turned; the Tories marched out, and the Whigs marched in. Walpole was among those who secured the Hanoverian succession. In 1717 he and his brother-in-law, Lord Townshend, resigned from the ministry of Stanhope and Sunderland, and for the next four years Walpole was critical of his former colleagues. He unsuccessfully opposed the South Sea scheme; but in 1719 he successfully opposed a Peerage Bill which was intended to limit very seriously the number of new peers that the Crown might create. As Walpole pointed out, this if passed would prevent future governments from overcoming the opposition of the Lords by threatening to create new peers.

In his personal character Walpole was broad-minded and tolerant, with no passionate enthusiasms to disturb his easy-going nature. His favourite principle was to 'let sleeping dogs lie.' In consequence he managed to retain office for twenty-one years (1721-1742), and his long rule contains few events of major importance. It is mainly a record of peaceful progress and growing commercial prosperity.



## Financial Reform

Walpole is the first of our great finance ministers. As such he illustrates the change that was creeping over our national life, when questions of Divine Right or of the Established Church (which a century before were producing civil wars) were giving way to matters of finance, taxation, and trade.

We have seen how Walpole repaired some of the mischief wrought by the bursting of the South Sea Bubble. In 1717 he had established a Sinking Fund to pay off the National Debt. Into this fund the government was to pay £1,000,000 regularly every year—a much better arrangement than waiting to see what was left over at the end of the year. Walpole himself often raided his own Sinking Fund for other purposes and later governments discontinued it; but at his fall the National Debt had been reduced by over £4,000,000.

Walpole also turned his attention to the taxes. There were three kinds of these: a land-tax (unpopular with landowners), customs duties on goods arriving from abroad (popular, as far as any taxes ever are, because it was thought that the foreigner paid part of them, and they could moreover often be evaded by smuggling), and excise duties on goods produced in this country (very unpopular because they were hard to evade). The customs in particular were in a very complicated and muddled state, and Walpole set about reducing and simplifying them. To promote our industry he abolished altogether the taxes on certain raw materials used in manufactures, and to encourage our export trade he removed various restrictions and sometimes even granted export bounties. But Walpole never thought of himself as a free trader and it would be a mistake for us to think of him as such.

In 1733 Walpole introduced an Excise Bill to convert the customs duties on tobacco and wine into excise duties. This was to be done by storing tobacco and wine in bonded warehouses on arrival in England. If they were taken out for home consumption they would pay the excise, but if they were re-exported they would go tax-free. This scheme was intended to



make smuggling and tax-evasion more difficult; to benefit the *entrepôt* trade of London and other ports; and to ease the payment of taxes as merchants would only be called on to pay when they took their goods out of bond. But the scheme was killed by Walpole's unscrupulous enemies who persuaded the ignorant populace that hordes of excise officers would soon be searching the people's homes and reducing everyone to a state of continental serfdom. "No slavery, no excise, no wooden shoes!" was the popular outcry. In the Commons Walpole's majority shrank, and Walpole, ever ready to give way under popular pressure, withdrew the bill.

### **Constitutional Development** ✓

No ruler is wise or energetic enough to act by himself, and from the earliest times kings had chosen ministers to help them. In addition there was usually a council of advisers, such as the Great Council of tenants-in-chief in feudal times, to be consulted over important matters. But councils grew large and unwieldy and the King tended to summon and consult a selected few instead of the whole body. Hence the Privy Council had grown out of the Great Council, and under the later Stuarts and early Hanoverians the Cabinet developed from the Privy Council. The royal ministers also became less and less the nominees of the Crown and more and more those of Parliament. But these changes were often very gradual and fitful and were by no means always the result of deliberate policy.

The Glorious Revolution of 1689 had curtailed the royal power; but both William III and Queen Anne exercised powers that would appear unconstitutional at the present day. They presided at Cabinet meetings; they chose their own ministers with, it is true, some reference to Parliament's wishes but with less than a modern monarch would give; they even on a few occasions refused their assent to bills passed by both Houses of Parliament. After 1714 much of this was changed. The King ceased to attend Cabinet meetings; no monarch since Anne has withheld the royal assent to bills; the early Hanoverians were too closely dependent upon the Whig party



to be able to choose their ministers where they liked. Hence definite steps were taken in the evolution of Cabinet government and of the office of Prime Minister; but here again it would be wrong to assume that these many-sided institutions appeared ready-made under the early Georges. ✎

The modern Prime Minister is usually the leader of the party with a majority in the House of Commons. After selection by the monarch the Prime Minister chooses his ministers, the more important of whom constitute his Cabinet. Every minister is responsible for his own department of State, such as the Board of Trade, or the Board of Education, or the War Office. The Cabinet meets periodically to decide important questions of policy, and it is generally recognized that it should be unanimous on major issues; otherwise a minister should resign. The Prime Minister acts as chairman at Cabinet meetings and is the general director of government policy; he informs the monarch of important decisions. If for any reason he resigns, then the whole government comes to an end and a new one has to be formed.

Judged in the light of later practice Walpole's ministry was of outstanding importance in the growth of our constitution. In the absence of the King, Walpole acted as chairman at Cabinet meetings. He became strong enough to enforce general agreement over matters of policy or else require the resignation of dissident ministers. Among these were Pulteney, Carteret (who disagreed particularly with Walpole's foreign policy), and 'Turnip' Townshend (so-called because on resigning he retired to his Norfolk estates to grow turnips). It was Walpole, too, who in schoolboy Latin, because it was the only language they had in common, reported the results of Cabinet meetings to the King.

But Walpole relied much more upon Court favour than would a modern Prime Minister. On George I's death in 1727 it seemed as if Walpole's ministry would be ended, but George II's queen, Caroline of Anspach, realized, better than her peppery little husband, the value of Walpole's service, and persuaded the King to continue the existing government. Walpole



held the positions of First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer and stoutly denied the accusation that he was making himself into a Premier or First Minister.

### ‘Let Sleeping Dogs lie’

Both on grounds of temperament and of policy Walpole was averse to stirring up trouble. He realized that civil dissension or foreign war would play into the hands of the Jacobites and would interfere with the peaceful progress of the country that was necessary to help England to recover from the wars against France. Hence at home and abroad he avoided trouble and sought tranquillity. Such a policy can easily degenerate into soul-destroying opportunism, but for a time it suited the requirements of the age.

In 1722 Walpole granted an Englishman named Wood the right to make copper coins for Ireland, and, incidentally, large profits for himself. Walpole's opponents scented a court intrigue, and Ireland refused to use the new coins which it thought would displace its own gold and silver. The Irish Tory, Dean Swift, in a series of *Drapier's Letters* attacked Walpole and the whole system of English government in Ireland so bitterly that the scared minister withdrew Wood's grant and paid him compensation.

In 1727 Walpole began the practice of passing annual Indemnity Acts cancelling any penalties that dissenters might have incurred by accepting office contrary to the Test and Corporation Acts. These Indemnity Acts thus freed dissenters from their disabilities without arousing the religious passions that would have resulted from any proposal to repeal the Test and Corporation Acts. They continued to be passed for the next century.

In 1736 Walpole was faced with trouble in Scotland, where dissatisfaction with the union with England still existed. During the execution of a smuggler the Edinburgh mob demonstrated in his favour and grew out of hand. In their eyes smuggling was no crime, and this particular smuggler had won added popularity by helping a fellow-smuggler to escape.



Captain Porteous of the City Guard ordered his men to fire, and six people were killed. Porteous was condemned to death, and when he was reprieved from London the Edinburgh mob took the law into their own hands, dragged Porteous from prison, and hanged him themselves. At first Walpole contemplated a heavy punishment for the city; but an outcry in Scotland led him to be content with a fine to provide compensation for the captain's widow.

Towards the colonies Walpole also turned an indulgent eye. He modified the Navigation Laws by allowing the colonies to export certain articles direct to Europe, and, although he realized that much smuggling existed, he closed his eyes to it. In 1733, as a result of complaints from the British West Indian sugar growers, he passed a Molasses Act which taxed sugar, rum, and molasses exported from the French West Indies to the British North American colonies. This act pleased the British sugar interests, and, as it was evaded by much smuggling, the American colonies for their part were not seriously displeased.

In foreign affairs Walpole pursued the same peaceful policy. He was aided by French distrust of Spanish and Austrian schemes to upset the Treaty of Utrecht—a distrust that led France to seek the friendship of England. Walpole's partner in France was the great Cardinal Fleury. In 1733 war broke out in Europe over the succession to the Polish throne. George II, thinking he might benefit Hanover, wanted England to join in the war; but Walpole steadfastly refused and boasted to Queen Caroline, "Madam, there are 50,000 men slain in Europe this year, and not one Englishman."

### **Growing Opposition**

After the death of Queen Caroline in 1737 the position of Walpole began seriously to weaken. His opponents were many. There were of course the Tories, ably led by Bolingbroke, who had been allowed to return from exile in 1723 on condition that he did not re-enter the House of Lords. In his weekly paper, *The Craftsman*, Bolingbroke maintained a continuous attack



upon Walpole and his Whigs. Inside Parliament the opposition was mainly Whig. Those whom Walpole had driven from office found an able leader in Carteret; they called themselves 'Patriots' and argued that Walpole's easy-going foreign policy was lowering the name of England abroad. Added to these were the 'Boys,' a group of young men who found in Walpole's apparently never-ending ministry an obstruction to all promotion. Among these 'Boys' was William Pitt, a young army officer, whose scathing attacks led Walpole to exclaim, "We must muzzle this terrible cornet of horse."

Walpole's enemies accused him of making himself Premier or First Minister, and of using methods of bribery and corruption. Walpole, like most politicians of his century, used methods which would be judged dishonest by modern standards. But he was by no means the worst offender of his age, and with many of his critics it was a case of 'sour grapes,' as Walpole implied when he once turned to a section of the opposition and remarked, "All these men have their price."

### **The War of Jenkins' Ear (1739) and Walpole's Fall (1742)**

Ever since the Treaty of Utrecht relations between England and Spain had been strained. Spain desired to recover Gibraltar and Minorca, and her merchants objected to English trading-privileges under the Asiento clause. Above all, they resented the abuse of these privileges by smuggling and other devices. Sometimes several other ships accompanied the one lawful ship to Porto Bello and unloaded their goods on to it under cover of night. Fights between the sailors of both nations were frequent, and the Spaniards claimed the right of searching English ships for illicit goods.

True to his usual policy Walpole tried for long to smooth out all difficulties; but his apparent acquiescence in the Spanish right of search inflamed his opponents, especially the outspoken and fervently patriotic William Pitt. Walpole's hand was eventually forced by Captain Jenkins who, on returning from a voyage, exhibited his ear with the story that it had been cut off by the Spaniards. His story has been much doubted and he



might very well have lost his ear many years before in an English pillory. But true or false, the incident forced Walpole to yield to the popular clamour for war. "They are ringing their bells," he declared. "They will soon be wringing their hands."

The War of Jenkins' Ear (1739) merged in the following year into the larger War of the Austrian Succession. Walpole clung to office, conducting the war half-heartedly and injuring his own reputation. By 1742 even Walpole could no longer escape the logic of hard facts. He resigned and retired to the Lords as the Earl of Orford. He died in 1745—in the year of the second great Jacobite rebellion which he had striven hard to avoid and the failure of which, when it did come, was largely due to the twenty years of peaceful progress and commercial prosperity that he had given to the country.

### QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Describe the main results of the Hanoverian Succession.
2. Who were the Jacobites? Give an account of the Rebellion in 1715 and account for its failure.
3. Write notes on: Septennial Act, Peerage Bill, Indemnity Acts, Excise Bill.
4. Describe clearly the benefits conferred by Walpole on Britain.
5. Illustrate and explain Walpole's policy of 'letting sleeping dogs lie.'
6. Compare and contrast Walpole with a modern Prime Minister.
7. Read the opening chapters of Sir Walter Scott's *Heart of Midlothian* for an account of the Porteous Riots.



## CHAPTER II

### THE FRENCH WARS AND THE ELDER PITT

#### **Domestic Affairs (1742-1756)**

FROM 1742 to 1744 Carteret was the leading member of the government. With his knowledge of German, his interest in foreign affairs, and his grandiose schemes of uniting the warring German states against France, he was a favourite of George II. But the 'Boys' attacked him for truckling to Hanover—"a despicable electorate," to use Pitt's phrase—and this gave great offence to the King. In 1744 Carteret was driven from office and was succeeded by Henry Pelham and his elder brother, the Duke of Newcastle. The Pelhams quickly set about winning over their potential enemies by the bestowal of places and pensions, a task after the heart of Newcastle, who has won undying fame in history as the prince of political jobbery and wire-pulling even in an age of corruption. Even Tories found a place in Pelham's 'broad-bottomed administration' of 1744-1754. In 1746 the King was forced to admit William Pitt to the ministry as Paymaster-General, in which capacity Pitt surprised everyone by not enriching himself with the nation's money. Pelham was a miniature Walpole, interested in finance and peaceful progress. He brought the War of the Austrian succession to an end in 1748 and lowered the interest of the National Debt. In 1751, mainly through the efforts of Lord Chesterfield, an act was passed reforming the calendar. Hitherto England had used the Julian calendar, based upon the calculations of Julius Caesar. Owing to a slight error this calendar was by 1751 eleven days wrong by the sun. An accurate calendar had been drawn up by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582, but although most of Europe had adopted it, the English suspicion of everything Roman Catholic had caused us to lag behind. It was now enacted that in 1752 September 2 should be followed by September 14, and that the year should begin on January 1 instead of March 25. There were not



wanting foolish opponents even of this change from the Old Style (O.S.) to the New Style (N.S.) calendar, for indignant crowds shouted, "Give us back our eleven days!"

On Pelham's death in 1754 his brother, the Duke of Newcastle, succeeded him. William Pitt soon quarrelled with his ignorant busybody of a leader and resigned. Newcastle's ministry saw the beginning of the Seven Years' War in 1756, which he so mismanaged that by 1757 he was obliged to hand over the conduct of the war to Pitt, while he himself managed Parliament. The Pitt-Newcastle coalition (1757-1761) outlived George II, whose reign ended in 1760.

### **The War of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748)**

The early years of the War of Jenkins' Ear were marked by unimportant and mostly unsuccessful attacks upon the ports of the Spanish Main, and by the spectacular voyage of Anson, who, following in the wake of Drake, plundered the Pacific coast of South America, captured treasure-ships, and returned triumphantly home by sailing round the world.

After a few years the war became merged in the European struggle over the Austrian succession. The Emperor Charles VI had done his utmost to safeguard the rights of his daughter, Maria Theresa, by hawking the Pragmatic Sanction round Europe and making all kinds of concessions to obtain signatures which the event proved mostly worthless. When he died in 1740 Maria Theresa found herself beset by enemies. Chief of these was the newly enthroned Frederick the Great of Prussia who signalized his accession by seizing Silesia and then gallantly offering to protect Maria's other possessions in return for recognition of his own robbery. Maria's plight attracted further vultures, and she was soon beset by France, Bavaria, and Spain, as well as Prussia. In 1742 the Elector of Bavaria was made Holy Roman Emperor, though Maria's husband, Francis of Lorraine, had expected election.

Britain sided with Maria, but her help proved of little use. In 1743 a British and Hanoverian army, accompanied by George II in person, reached the River Main. At Dettingen it



found itself in a dangerous position and its way blocked by the French, but owing to bad French generalship the British won a fruitless victory. This was the last battle in which a British king took personal part, and the peppery little man acquitted himself bravely. When his horse ran away with him he dismounted and exclaimed, "No more running away now!"

In 1745 another British army under the King's second son, the Duke of Cumberland, met the French under Marshal Saxe at Fontenoy in the Austrian Netherlands. An officer of the British Guards saluted the French and invited them to fire first. The British fought bravely, but the French won a notable victory partly through the efforts of their Irish Brigade. "Cursed be the laws that deprive me of such subjects!" George II is said to have exclaimed when he heard the news. A few days after Fontenoy Prince Charles Edward, the Young Pretender (son of the Old Pretender who was still living), landed in Scotland, and Cumberland's army was recalled to defend the homeland.

The war dragged on till 1748 when Britain forced Austria to agree to the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. Maria Theresa had to agree to Prussia's conquest of Silesia, but her husband was recognized as Emperor (he had been elected in 1745 on the death of the Elector of Bavaria and was the first of the Hapsburg-Lorraine dynasty which lasted till 1918). The colonial situation reverted to 'as-you-were.' During the war Britain had taken Louisburg at the mouth of the St Lawrence, and France had captured the East India Company's factory at Madras. Both conquests were restored.

### **The Forty-Five**

In 1745 the fears that had influenced Walpole's peaceful policy were justified. Just after Fontenoy the Old Pretender's son landed at Moidart on the west coast of Scotland with but seven companions. This was Charles Edward, the Young Pretender, known to history as Bonnie Prince Charlie. Far different from his pessimistic and uninspiring father, the Young Pretender by his dashing gallantry and attractive personality



soon won over sufficient of the Highland chiefs and their followers for him to march upon Edinburgh. Charles avoided General Cope, who had been sent against him, entered the Scottish capital, and proclaimed his father James VIII of Scotland and III of England. Meanwhile Cope had brought his army by sea to Dunbar, hoping to block the Prince's route to England. Battle was joined at Prestonpans in September, 1745, and resulted in an overwhelming victory for the Jacobites. The fierce Highland charge scattered the British regulars who, in the words of Prince Charles, "fled like rabbits." Cope himself outstripped all others and was the first to bring news of his own defeat to Berwick.

After six weeks' merrymaking at Holyrood Palace, which gave the British government time to bring its veteran soldiers from the Continent, Charles marched south to invade England. He avoided a British army under Wade at Newcastle by swerving west and entering England *via* Carlisle and Lancashire. Through Preston and Manchester the Jacobite army proceeded to Derby which was reached on 'Black' Friday, December 6, 1745. With the Jacobites within a week's march from London, the capital was alarmed. Guards were stationed at Finchley on the northern outskirts of the city, the Duke of Newcastle is said to have been contemplating joining the Jacobites, and the citizens of London hastened wildly to withdraw their money from the Bank of England before the Highlanders withdrew it. But at Derby the Jacobite leaders advised a retreat. Charles at first resisted. "Rather than go back I would be twenty feet underground." But his best officer, Lord George Murray, insisted, and Charles gave a sulky assent.

What would have happened had the Jacobites pushed on to the capital will always be a matter of speculation. London was undoubtedly alarmed; but two British armies (one under Wade in the north, and another under Cumberland in the Midlands) were closing in upon the Jacobites, and the English response to the Prince's recruiting appeals had been practically nil.

The rebellion now became, in Horace Walpole's words,



“that most feeble of all things, a rebellion on the defensive.” Charles won another victory at Falkirk (January, 1746), but was steadily driven north. The Duke of Cumberland was in no hurry to pursue, but spent the spring training his men to meet the Highland charge. In April, 1746, the two armies met at Culloden Moor near Inverness. Charles’s 5,000 hungry and discontented followers were completely routed by Cumberland’s 8,000 well-fed and well-trained troops. Cumberland’s cruelty in punishing the rebels after the battle earned him the horrible nickname of ‘Butcher.’ He is more pleasantly commemorated in the name ‘Sweet William’ which gardeners gave in his honour to a newly produced flower. Prince Charles himself was hunted for five months; but the Scottish peasantry protected him, and eventually, with the help of Flora Macdonald, he escaped aboard a French privateer to the Continent where he died, a drunkard, in 1788. He left no descendants, and with the death of his young brother, the Cardinal York, in 1807, the line of Pretenders came to an end.

After the rebellion the government took steps to undermine the dangerous clan system of the Highlands. The powers of the Highland chiefs were reduced, and the clans were forbidden to wear the kilt, possess arms, or even play the bagpipes (which the law courts declared were instruments of war). Later William Pitt more sensibly diverted Highland ferocity into other channels, and Scottish regiments distinguished themselves in the capture of Quebec (1759).

The Forty-Five failed for much the same reasons as the Fifteen: lack of French support, English distrust of the Catholic Stuarts, and a reluctance to risk comfort and safety in support of Divine Right. In addition, Walpole’s government had made England prosperous and contented and had accustomed it to the Hanoverian dynasty.

### **The Situation in Europe before the Seven Years’ War**

Maria Theresa had never reconciled herself to the loss of Silesia and sought fresh allies for another attack upon Prussia. She was disappointed with the British alliance, and her chief



adviser on foreign affairs, Kaunitz, urged that an alliance with France would best serve Austria's interests. Although France and Austria had for centuries fought on opposite sides, they now joined together in face of the growing power of Prussia. This was the so-called 'diplomatic revolution.' It provoked in reply an alliance between Britain and Prussia.

### **The Situation in the Colonies : (1) India**

India should always be thought of as a sub-continent rather than a country. It is about twenty times the size of Great Britain or as large as Europe without Russia. There is no single race, language, or religion to unite its various peoples into one nation, for from time immemorial India has been the prey of invaders entering usually through the passes of the north-west. Over 200 separate languages are spoken. The chief religion is Hinduism which embraces about two-thirds of the total population. But Hinduism itself comprises over 2,000 separate castes, ranging from the Brahmin or priestly caste at the top to the untouchables at the bottom. The caste system is in some ways as insuperable a barrier as a separate religion itself, since intermarriage is forbidden and complete segregation sometimes enforced. India's other main religion, Mohammedanism, embraces about one-quarter of the entire population. It is strongest in the north, where successive waves of Mohammedan invaders have settled. Hindu-Moslem rivalry has been, and still is, one of the biggest obstacles to Indian unity.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries India enjoyed some degree of unity under the rule of the Mogul Emperors at Delhi. The Mogul Empire dated from Baber's invasion of India in 1526; one of the greatest Mogul Emperors was Akbar, the contemporary of Queen Elizabeth. During her reign the English East India Company was founded (1600). The Portuguese had been the first European traders in India since Vasco da Gama's voyage round the Cape. They had been followed by the Dutch who, however, soon concentrated on the East Indies rather than on the mainland. By 1700 the two countries mainly concerned in India's trade were England and France. English



traders had established factories at Bombay (part of Charles II's dowry from Catherine of Braganza), Madras, and Calcutta. French factories were at Chandernagore near Calcutta, and at Pondicherry near Madras. Both French and English trained native soldiers or sepoy to protect their factories.

In 1707, with the death of Aurangzeb, the Mogul Empire quickly declined and India became once more a prey to disunity and invasion. A Persian army in 1739 robbed Delhi of its precious treasures. The turbulent Mahratta tribes of central India, and the rulers of far-off states like Hyderabad, Mysore, and Bengal became almost independent. All this spelt danger and uncertainty to European interests.

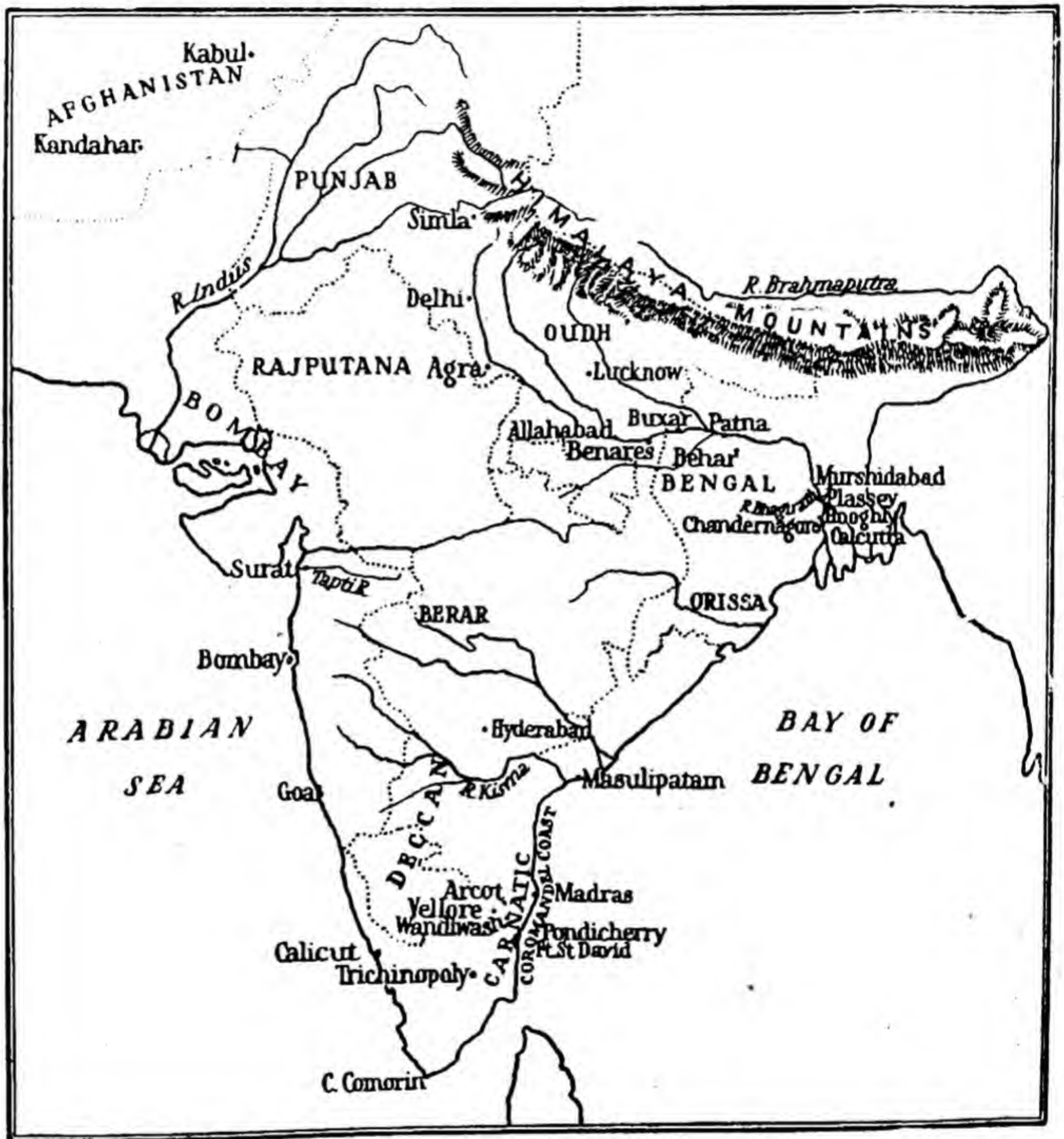
France was saved—for a time—by Dupleix, Governor of Pondicherry from 1741 to 1754. Dupleix reorganized the French sepoy, intrigued with native princes, and captured Madras during the War of the Austrian Succession. To his chagrin he had to return it at the peace. In 1748 a disputed election to the throne of the Carnatic (in which province both Madras and Pondicherry lay) gave Dupleix a further chance of spreading French influence. Dupleix supported Chunda Sahib, while the other candidate, Mohammed Ali, appealed to the British. For a while Chunda Sahib carried all before him. Mohammed Ali was besieged in Trichinopoly and the whole British interest in Madras was threatened. At this critical juncture the situation was saved by Robert Clive.

Robert Clive (1725-1774) was the son of a small Shropshire squire. As a boy he was fonder of fighting than of study, and he is reported, along with a band of schoolfellows, to have exacted apples and half-pence from the shopkeepers of Market Drayton to save their windows from being broken. He was sent out to India as a writer or clerk in the Company but was so unhappy that he attempted suicide. Fortunately the pistol did not fire. His thoughts soon turned to soldiering, in which profession he found a more congenial outlet for his energies than in poring over ledgers. When Dupleix besieged Trichinopoly, Clive proposed, as a diversion, an attack upon Arcot, the capital of the Carnatic (1751). With only 200 Europeans and 300 sepoy



Clive seized Arcot, but was himself then besieged by Chunda Sahib's army of 10,000! Describing Clive's defence of Arcot, Lord Macaulay wrote:

"During fifty days the young captain maintained the defence with a firmness, vigilance, and ability which would have done



INDIA IN THE 'TIME OF CLIVE

honour to the oldest marshal in Europe," and when supplies ran low "the sepoys came to Clive, not to complain of their scanty fare, but to propose that all the grain should be given to the Europeans, who required more nourishment than the natives of Asia. The thin gruel, they said, which was strained away from the rice, would suffice for themselves."



When the besiegers retired Clive pursued and scattered them. Mohammed Ali became ruler of the Carnatic, and when Clive returned to England in 1753 he was loaded with honours. In the following year Dupleix was recalled in disgrace by the French government, which had done little to help its distinguished servant either in prosperity or in adversity. By 1756, when the Seven Years' War officially broke out, Clive was back again in Madras as a colonel.

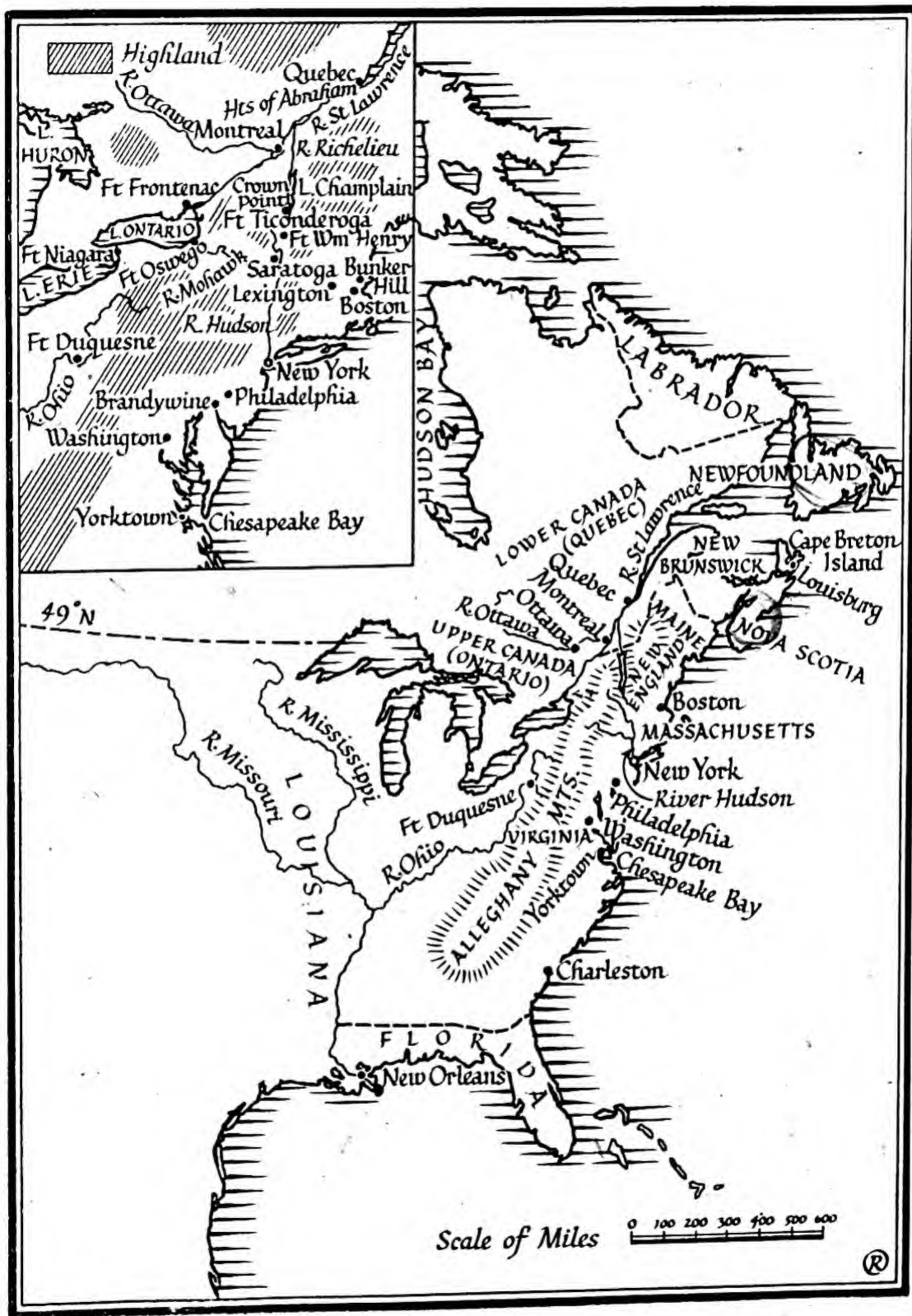
### **The Situation in the Colonies : (2) America**

In America also Britain and France were engaged in hostilities before war was actually declared. But the situation was very different from that in India, as North America was climatically suited for actual European colonization, made further possible by the relative smallness of the Red Indian tribes who inhabited the vast continent.

During the seventeenth century English colonies had been established along the east coast of North America. With the foundation of Georgia in 1732 their number reached thirteen. Each colony had its own separate Assembly which passed laws and voted taxes. Moreover the colonies were very different in outlook and tradition. The New England colonies in the north (such as Massachusetts and Connecticut) were of Puritan origin, and were inhabited by liberty-loving and hardy farmers and fishermen. In the south were colonies with a Church of England or Roman Catholic foundation. The chief southern colony was the tobacco-growing state of Virginia. The only bonds of union between these various colonies (apart from race and language) were that they were all subject to certain general enactments of the mother-country, such as the Navigation Laws, and that they were all governed by Governors sent out from Britain.

The French colonies lay along the great river-systems of North America. The French had pushed their way up the River St Lawrence and colonized Canada, whence trappers set off on hazardous trapping-expeditions or fur-traders bartered with Indian tribes for valuable pelts. By the Treaty of Utrecht





NORTH AMERICA (1714-1815)



(1713) Britain had obtained the Hudson Bay Territory, Newfoundland, and Nova Scotia. But the French still possessed in Cape Breton Island, with its fortress of Louisburg, a commanding position in the St Lawrence estuary.

At the end of the seventeenth century a French explorer, La Salle, had sailed from the head-waters of the River Ohio near Lake Erie to the mouth of the Mississippi in the Gulf of Mexico. France claimed this vast inland region (named Louisiana in honour of Louis XIV) as its own.

Whereas the British colonies were disunited and left by the mother-country somewhat to their own devices, the French colonies were closely controlled by royal officials sent out from France. But British colonists numbered about one and a half millions and the French only 60,000—a proportion of twenty-five British to one Frenchman.

By the middle of the eighteenth century the French aim in North America was clear. It was to link up the Mississippi by means of its tributary, the Ohio, with the St Lawrence. This would hem the British colonies into the coastal strip between the Alleghany Mountains and the sea. To do this the French began the building of a chain of forts commanding strategic points. Crown Point and Ticonderoga were designed to guard the Lake Champlain end of the Hudson gap. The British colonists replied by building Fort Oswego on the shores of Lake Ontario and selecting a site for a fort near the source of the River Ohio. From this latter point the British were dislodged and the French erected their own Fort Duquesne (1753). The colonists of Virginia felt their safety imperilled, and in 1754 sent a young officer called George Washington with a force of colonials to capture the fort. He failed, and in the following year Washington accompanied General Braddock and a much larger force of regulars on a similar expedition. Unfortunately Braddock failed to realize the type of warfare required and allowed his closely packed, scarlet-clad soldiers to be ambushed by both Indians and French. Braddock himself was mortally wounded, and Washington was left to bring back about one-third of the original force.



## The Opening of the Seven Years' War

In 1756 the Seven Years' War commenced, with Britain and Prussia on one side, and France, Austria, and Russia on the other.

The British Prime Minister, the Duke of Newcastle, was quite unfitted to carry on a great war. He knew little of foreign affairs and was extremely ignorant even of elementary geography, as was evidenced by his delighted astonishment on being informed that Cape Breton was an island. He had neglected the navy, failed to appreciate the importance of colonial and commercial questions, and devoted too much attention to the defence of Hanover. His only accomplishment was his ability to manage Parliament by bribery and corruption. On all these counts he was bitterly attacked by William Pitt.

Bad news soon poured in from the colonies. In America, where we had already failed to capture Fort Duquesne, an attack on Louisburg was unsuccessful, while the French captured the British forts of Oswego and William Henry (1756). In the same year the Nabob of Bengal, Surajah Dowlah, acting under French influence, seized the British factory at Calcutta and shut up 146 prisoners in a small chamber about twenty feet square. Out of this 'Black Hole of Calcutta' only twenty-three emerged alive the following morning.

Newcastle's government was more directly responsible for the loss of Minorca in June, 1756. The French launched an attack upon the island, and Newcastle's government sent Admiral Byng to raise the siege. Byng's fleet was under-provisioned and ill-equipped, and, after fighting an indecisive action, Byng deemed it more prudent to retire to Gibraltar. Minorca surrendered and a storm of indignation arose. Newcastle made Byng the scapegoat, and the Admiral was tried by court martial and sentenced to death for negligence. He was shot on the quarter-deck of his ship at Portsmouth. Pitt, perceiving where the real blame lay, had tried to save Byng, and the Frenchman, Voltaire, in his story *Candide* wrote ironically of the incident, "*Il est bon de tuer de temps en temps un amiral pour encourager les autres.*"

From my  
It is good to kill from time to time an admiral



In the following year (1757) came news of a disaster on the Continent, where all Frederick the Great's military skill was needed to withstand the combined pressure of France, Austria, and Russia. The Duke of Cumberland, the one-time hero of Culloden, was defeated by a large French army at Hastenbeck and obliged to sign the Convention of Kloster-Zeven by which he agreed to disband his army. George II, fearful of Hanover, spoke scornfully of his son on his return to London. When the duke entered the room where the King was playing cards, George openly remarked, "Here is my son, who has ruined me and disgraced himself."

### **William Pitt the Elder: Early Life and Character**

In the midst of these disasters the nation turned to William Pitt.

William Pitt (1708-1778) was the grandson of a famous interloper who had proved such a thorn in the side of the East India Company that it had muzzled him by making him Governor of Madras. The 'governor' amassed a considerable fortune and on his return to England was one of the first of those Indian 'nabobs' who bought up estates and aroused, through their wealth, the envy of the older aristocracy. Among his newly acquired property was the rotten borough of Old Sarum, which, although without inhabitants, still returned two members to Parliament. It was as member for Old Sarum that William Pitt entered Parliament in 1735.

He soon distinguished himself as one of the 'Boy' opponents of Walpole. He accused Walpole of truckling to Spain, of making himself First Minister by dishonest methods, and of submitting overmuch to the influence of the Court. On Walpole's fall Pitt hoped for office, but was passed over by Wilmington and Carteret. Thereupon he denounced Carteret's continental schemes and accused him of subordinating British interests to those of George II's "despicable electorate." The King was infuriated. In 1746, however, George II was obliged to accept Pitt as Paymaster-General of the Forces in Pelham's 'broad-bottomed' administration. Paymaster Pitt surprised everyone



by accepting only his official salary and refraining from paying out to himself money intended for the forces. After eight years Pelham died, and his brother Newcastle became Prime



WILLIAM PITT THE ELDER

*Richard Brompton*

Minister. Pitt's expected promotion did not come, the two ministers quarrelled, and Pitt resigned in 1755.

He was thus in opposition when the Seven Years' War broke out. He denounced Newcastle's misconduct of the war and laid the blame for Byng's failure on the minister who had despatched him. At the end of 1756 Newcastle's government was driven from office, and Pitt and Devonshire formed a new ministry. But the wire-pulling Newcastle was too strong to be thus passed over, and after lasting for five months

(November, 1756, to April, 1757) the Pitt-Devonshire government was defeated by Newcastle's minions. For eleven weeks, in the midst of a critical war, the country was without a government; the nation refused to have Newcastle, and Newcastle refused to allow the nation anyone else. At last (June, 1757) a solution was reached. Newcastle and Pitt formed a coalition on the understanding that Pitt should direct the war and Newcastle should manage Parliament. "The Duke gives everything and Mr Pitt does everything," was how the division of duties was described.

The two men were widely different in outlook and ability. Whereas Newcastle was an incompetent busybody who owed his position to his family connexions and his diligence in managing his party followers, Pitt did not belong to any of the powerful Whig sections, and owed his rise entirely to his own outstanding ability. He distrusted the party connexions he saw around him so much that he disbelieved in party government, which, with all its faults, is indispensable to any stable demo-



cratic system. Like his son after him, he was scrupulously honest in an age of political dishonesty, and relied for support, not upon the Court (as Walpole had done), nor upon bribed followers (as Newcastle was doing), but upon the nation. His oratory gave him a control over the Lower House that earned for him the title of 'The Great Commoner.' He excelled in the declamatory style rather than in the argumentative; his voice would resound like thunder one moment and sink to a whisper the next as if he were a tragic actor.

He had many faults. He was overbearing and haughty, even to his own colleagues, and was at times too theatrical in his manner. When he entered the royal chamber he bowed so low, said the wits of the time, that "you could see his hook nose between his legs." From an early age he suffered from gout, which took him often to Bath, Tunbridge Wells, and similar places, and interfered considerably with his political activities. This may explain in part his irritability and impatience; but even his gout was turned to good account, for we are told that he always arranged his copious bandages to their best advantage before granting an interview.

### **Pitt as War Minister**

"I believe I can save the country and that no one else can," said Pitt on assuming office. His ministry, which lasted from 1757 till he was driven from office by George III in 1761, fully justified his boast.

Pitt's general strategy was to "win Canada on the banks of the Elbe." Much as he had previously attacked the payment of continental subsidies, he continued to pay our ally Frederick the Great £670,000 a year to keep France occupied near home. A similar purpose was behind the frequent and expensive raids on the French coast which he organized and which, he estimated, kept 30,000 French troops employed at home. Meanwhile Pitt directed our main energies towards naval and colonial affairs. Not the least of his many claims to fame is his realization that Britain's greatness lay in commerce and overseas empire. In order to immobilize the French fleet and



blockade France he grasped the correct principle that the chief French naval ports, such as Brest and Toulon, should be blockaded as closely as possible. With abounding energy he supervised in person the details of many of his schemes, and brusquely overrode the obstructions of officialdom. When he was told that the fleet could not be made ready by a certain time, he threatened to arrest the head of the Admiralty; in four days the fleet was ready. He possessed, moreover, the valuable quality of discerning ability in others. Older officers, like the Duke of Cumberland, were replaced by rising young men of his own choice, such as Wolfe, Hawke, and Ferdinand of Brunswick. The nation was inspired, and even the Highlands of Scotland were led to contribute their quota to victory, for Pitt had the good sense to raise Highland regiments and thus divert Highland energies away from civil strife and revolt.

### **The Turn of the Tide (1757-1760)**

In India Clive's successes were largely independent of Pitt's direction of affairs. Indeed the victory of Plassey was won before the Pitt-Newcastle ministry assumed office. But even here Pitt's inspiration was felt towards the end of the war, while British control of the sea, which Pitt maintained, helped towards our ultimate victory. Clive had returned to India in 1756 as Governor of Fort St David (south of Madras) just a few weeks before the 'Black Hole of Calcutta.' In 1757, with the help of British sea-power, he transferred an army from the Carnatic to Bengal, and was there able, aided by a fleet bombardment by Admiral Watson, to capture the French settlement of Chandernagore. Clive's real aim was to depose Surajah Dowlah, the Nabob of Bengal. In 1757, with only 3,000 men (of whom less than 1,000 were whites) he gave battle to an army of 50,000 near the village of Plassey. After a terrific artillery duel the Nabob's hordes broke and fled as the British forces advanced. Surajah Dowlah was deposed and executed, and one of his own advisers, Mir Jaffir, whose treachery had helped Clive, was placed on the vacant throne. The East India Company was rewarded with large possessions in Bengal, while



Clive began the undesirable practice of helping himself to treasures as his own personal share of the spoils.

While Clive had been busy in Bengal a French expedition under Lally had arrived at Pondicherry in the Carnatic and was threatening Madras. Clive sent a force south, which on its way captured Masulipatam and thus gave Britain control of the strip of coast known as the Circars (1759). In the following year Eyre Coote defeated the French at Wandewash. French



THE HEIGHTS OF ABRAHAM

The British setting out to assault the French lines

military power in India was now destroyed, and in 1760 Clive once more returned home, where he was rewarded with a peerage. Clive's third visit to India and subsequent Indian affairs are dealt with in Chapter XIX.

In the west Pitt's influence was more direct. To conquer Canada he planned a threefold attack. One force was to push its way direct up the River St Lawrence, capturing Louisburg and Quebec; a second up the Hudson River, capturing



Ticonderoga on Lake Champlain; a third along the River Ohio and the Great Lakes, capturing the key position of Fort Duquesne. The three forces would then converge on Montreal. In 1758 Louisburg, the 'Gibraltar of the St Lawrence,' was captured by an assault wherein the navy under Admiral Boscawen helped by besieging Cape Breton Island. In the same year Fort Duquesne was captured and its name changed to Pittsburg in honour of the British minister. Only at Ticonderoga did the French under Montcalm hold their own.

In 1759 the attack on Quebec began. Amherst was given the task of capturing Ticonderoga and advancing down the St Lawrence to meet the main British force advancing up the river. The main attack was led by James Wolfe, a somewhat eccentric officer, only 33 years of age, who had been personally selected by Pitt. Wolfe had fought as a lad at Dettingen and was highly thought of by George II, who replied to objections against the new commander's eccentricities by remarking, "Mad, is he? Then I wish he would bite some of my other generals." Pitt himself superintended the despatch of stores and munitions, and the expedition set sail under a naval escort commanded by Admiral Saunders. A passage up the still uncharted St Lawrence was found by a young pilot named James Cook, the later discoverer of New Zealand. But Wolfe's difficulties were only just beginning. Amherst had captured Ticonderoga only after a long struggle, and his advance was too slow to promise help for Wolfe before winter set in and froze the St Lawrence. Quebec was strongly defended by shore batteries on the lower reaches of the St Lawrence and by precipitous cliffs farther up. After unsuccessful attempts to overcome the shore batteries, Wolfe transferred many of his troops to a point well above Quebec and succeeded in finding a narrow path up the cliffs. While Admiral Saunders launched a feint attack on the shore batteries, Wolfe under cover of night landed at a place later known as Wolfe's Cove and scaled the heights, the navy rendering useful assistance by hauling up guns and other heavy equipment. On the following morning a British army, includ-



ing Pitt's Highland regiments, was ready for battle on the Heights of Abraham just outside Quebec (September, 1759). The British were victorious, but Wolfe and the French leader, Montcalm, were slain. In 1760 the triple advance on Montreal was completed. Amherst captured the city, and Canada became British.

In 1759 the French West Indian island of Guadeloupe was captured—a prelude to further successes in the West Indies which continued to the end of the war.

The British navy had helped towards our successes in America by escorting British forces and preventing the French from sending reinforcements. It played an even more valuable part by defeating the French schemes for invading Britain. On one side of the Channel the French collected flat-bottomed boats and trained landing parties; on the other the British recruited a militia to repel the invader. But Britain's first line of defence was the navy, which during the summer of 1759 blockaded the French fleet in their naval bases of Toulon and Brest. The French aimed at uniting their fleets and gaining the mastery of the Channel. In August the Toulon fleet managed to slip out and pass Gibraltar where, since the loss of Minorca, the British Mediterranean fleet was based. Within three hours Admiral Boscawen was in pursuit. At Lagos off the southern coast of Portugal the French Mediterranean fleet was destroyed. Three months later the Brest fleet escaped when Admiral Hawke's blockading squadron had been driven by storms to seek refuge at Torbay. Hawke set sail and sighted the French in Quiberon Bay off the rocky and dangerous coast of Brittany. A storm was raging, and Hawke's navigator warned his admiral of the danger of giving battle so close to the shore. "You have done right," was the reply, "in warning me of the danger. Now lay me alongside of the enemy!" Hawke's boldness was justified by the event; at Quiberon Bay (November, 1759) the French Atlantic fleet was destroyed or scattered, and all fear of a French invasion was past.

The 'Year of Victories' witnessed also the success of British arms on the Continent, where, at the Battle of Minden (August,



1759), Ferdinand of Brunswick defeated a French attack upon Hanover.

### **Pitt's Resignation (October, 1761)**

In 1760 George II was succeeded by his grandson, George III. The new King was a man of ideas, albeit often bad ones. He was determined to exercise more authority than his grandfather and his great-grandfather, and set out to undermine Pitt's popularity by ending what he called a "bloody and expensive war."

He intruded into the Cabinet his former Scottish tutor, the Earl of Bute, who soon found a pretext for attacking Pitt. In 1761 a secret Family Compact was signed between Bourbon France and Bourbon Spain, whereby the latter promised to enter the war at the first favourable opportunity. Pitt, who suspected the existence of this agreement, proposed to the Cabinet that Britain should forestall Spain's action by declaring war first. This would enable us to seize the Spanish treasure-fleet before its safe arrival from Spanish America. Bute found plenty of ministers to oppose Pitt's proposal, including Newcastle himself. Many of Pitt's colleagues resented his overbearing manner, many thought him drunk with power and popularity and overinclined to waste the nation's blood and money in prolonging the war. In October, 1761, failing to gain his point, Pitt resigned.

Early in 1762 Pitt's prophecies were fulfilled. Spain, with her treasure-fleet safely home, declared war. Her empire was soon being torn to shreds. Admiral Rodney had already captured additional French West Indian islands. Now Havana, the capital of Spanish Cuba, was captured; while an expedition from Madras deprived Spain of Manila and the Philippines. George III still sought peace, and after such initial disasters Spain was disinclined to continue the war. In 1762 Newcastle to his amazement was forced to resign, and Bute became Prime Minister. Without consulting our ally Frederick of Prussia, George and Bute arranged terms of peace which were carried in the Commons by 319 votes to 65. As Horace Walpole, the gossiping son of Sir Robert, put it, 65 "were not bribed."



### **The Peace of Paris, 1763**

By the Treaty of Paris Britain made extensive gains. She obtained Canada, including Cape Breton Island; that part of Louisiana east of the Mississippi; Dominica, Grenada, Tobago, and St Vincent in the West Indies; Senegal in Africa; while in India the French had to recognize our military predominance by destroying their own fortifications and disbanding their armies. All these gains were at the expense of France. From Spain Britain gained Florida; but Spain was compensated for this loss by obtaining Louisiana west of the Mississippi under a separate arrangement with France. Britain also reacquired Minorca.

Two criticisms were levelled against the treaty by Pitt and others. The first was that Britain could easily have obtained better terms. We returned too much, it was said, especially to Spain. We allowed the French to retain certain fishing-rights off Newfoundland and gave them the use of two small islands for this purpose. We gave up valuable West Indian islands such as Guadeloupe, Martinique, and St Lucia. We returned Goree in West Africa. We allowed France to retain its trading-stations of Pondicherry and Chandernagore in India. To Spain we returned Havana in Cuba and Manila in the Philippines. Doubtless Britain could have exacted better terms for herself, but to have demanded the full pound of flesh would not necessarily have been better for Britain or the peace of the world in the long run. As it was, the broad fact emerged that Britain was now supreme in North America and India.

The second criticism was of what Pitt denounced as England's "insidious, tricking, base, and treacherous" desertion of Prussia. Just as fifty years earlier at Utrecht a Tory government had ended a Whig war without consulting our allies, so now another Tory government acted in a similar fashion. Britain in consequence earned the title of 'perfidious Albion.' Frederick of Prussia (a notorious treaty-breaker himself) was able to extricate himself from his difficulties, and by a separate peace retained his hold over Silesia. But he never forgave



Britain's desertion, and some years later, when Britain was involved in war with the American colonies, she found herself, thanks largely to George III, without a friend in Europe.

### QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Describe the Jacobite rebellion of 1745-1746 and account for its failure.
2. Write notes on: Duke of Cumberland, Duke of Newcastle, Dupleix, Frederick of Prussia.
3. Describe the part played by British sea-power 1740-1763.
4. Give an account of the Seven Years' War in either America or India.
5. Why is the year 1759 known as the 'Year of Victories'?
6. Construct a time-chart from 1750 to 1763 to show the chief events of the Seven Years' War under the headings: Events at Sea, on the Continent, in America, and in India.
7. In what ways did Pitt contribute to British success in the Seven Years' War?

✕



## CHAPTER III

### GEORGE III AND THE LOSS OF THE AMERICAN COLONIES

#### **Character and Policy of George III**

GEORGE III, who had begun his reign by ousting Pitt and Newcastle from office and ending the Seven Years' War, was a young man of twenty-two on his accession. His father, the Prince of Wales, had died in 1751, and since then George had been under the influence of his mother and his Scottish tutor, the Earl of Bute. With George III the Hanoverian dynasty ceased to be foreign. The King himself proudly proclaimed, "Born and educated in this country, I glory in the name of Briton." In consequence of this and of the now obvious impossibility of restoring the Stuarts, the Tories ceased to be Jacobites and transferred to the Hanoverians that loyalty to the Crown which had hitherto made many of them pro-Stuart.

The new King had many good qualities. He was industrious, brave, and devoted to his wife and family. The interest which he took in his Windsor estates earned him the nickname 'Farmer George.' But he was ignorant and narrow-minded, and his distorted views of his own capabilities led him to be self-willed and even obstinate. Although his ministers and his subjects cannot escape their share of responsibility for the disasters of the reign, the King himself must bear a heavy load. Over the colonial question in America and the religious question in Ireland George used his influence on the wrong side.

From the outset George was determined to follow his mother's advice and "be a king." Bute used his influence in the same direction, many of his ideas being derived from Bolingbroke's *The Idea of a Patriot King*, which attacked the English party system and its corruption by the Whigs, and maintained that the King should exercise closer control over his ministers. George therefore began his reign with ideas somewhat like those of the benevolent despots of the Continent. But conditions in



Britain were very different from those abroad. Parliamentary government, albeit narrowly based and often corrupt, was an established principle. George had no intention of trying to dispense with Parliament; nor is there any evidence that he wished to revive the royal power of presiding over Cabinet meetings. Rather his aim was to keep the machinery of government intact but to gear it to his own personal wishes.

To do this George III aimed first at destroying the Whig monopoly of power which had existed since 1714, and at depriving the Whigs of the royal patronage by which they had strengthened their position. Secondly, he wished to build up a party of his own, a party which would support the King's policy in the Cabinet, in Parliament, and in the constituencies. To create such a party (which in time came to be called the 'King's Friends') the patronage taken from the Whigs would be useful; for George was not out to destroy corruption, but to see that he, and not the Whigs, benefited from its use. Thirdly, the King aimed eventually at obtaining a Prime Minister who would be the servant of the royal will.

### **"Wilkes and Liberty"**

Soon after the conclusion of the Seven Years' War Bute resigned, and the King chose a pedantic Whig lawyer, George Grenville, to succeed him. It was Grenville who, with his Stamp Act of 1765, began the taxation of the American colonies that eventually provoked their revolt. But what attracted far more attention at the time was the attack made by Grenville's government upon John Wilkes.

Wilkes was a disreputable and dissolute 'man about town,' a member of Parliament, and the editor of a paper called the *North Briton* wherein the Scotsman Bute and his policy had been bitterly attacked. Number 45 of the paper had contained outspoken comments on the King's speech delivered to Parliament in connexion with the Treaty of Paris. The King, Wilkes wrote, had given "the sanction of his sacred name to the most odious measures and to the most unjustifiable public declarations from a throne ever renowned for truth, honour, and unsullied



virtue." As for foreign opinion, wrote Wilkes, "I am sure all foreigners, especially the King of Prussia, will hold the minister in contempt and abhorrence." George III regarded these comments as an attack upon his own honour and truthfulness and urged the government to prosecute those responsible for seditious libel. Accordingly a general warrant was issued for the arrest of the "authors, printers, and publishers" of the paper, without mentioning anyone by name. Under this Wilkes and 48 others were arrested. Wilkes counter-attacked on two grounds: first that as a member of Parliament he enjoyed freedom from arrest (except for certain very serious offences), and, secondly, that general warrants (*i.e.*, those mentioning no names) were illegal. The courts released Wilkes on his first plea, and later the judges decided that general warrants were illegal. This was an important safeguard for the liberty of the individual, for it meant that no one could be arrested by warrant unless he were actually named. Grenville, urged on by the King, was still out for blood, however, and persuaded Parliament to declare that the privilege of freedom from arrest enjoyed by members did not extend to libel. This placed Wilkes in danger again, especially as the House of Lords had just condemned as libellous some of his writings. To escape the consequences Wilkes fled to France. In 1764 the House of Commons expelled him, and the law courts declared him an outlaw.

Four years later Wilkes returned to England, where he served the term of imprisonment inflicted upon him for his libellous writings. Although in many ways a dissolute rascal, he was regarded as the champion of liberty and was immensely popular. In 1768-1769 he stood for election to Parliament for the county of Middlesex. Three times he was elected, and each time Parliament declared him ineligible for membership. After the last election Parliament declared his opponent, Colonel Luttrell, to be member for Middlesex, although Wilkes had defeated him by 1,143 votes to 296. Riots then took place in London with the slogan "Wilkes and Liberty." The City of London championed Wilkes by electing him alderman and later Lord Mayor. At the same time the Prime



Minister, Grafton, and the royal system of government were being attacked in the anonymous *Letters of Junius*, probably the work of Sir Philip Francis. Not till 1774, after a further election, was Wilkes allowed to take his seat for Middlesex. The Middlesex elections had succeeded in vindicating the rights of electors as against the House of Commons and had demonstrated the need for Parliamentary reform.

In yet another struggle, this time for the freedom of the press, John Wilkes played a leading part. In 1771, Wilkes, in his capacity of alderman for the City of London, refused to convict a printer who was accused of incorrectly reporting speeches made in Parliament. The House of Commons, although allowing a certain amount of reporting of its proceedings, only did so with an ill grace, and it now tried to override Wilkes. The Lord Mayor, Crosby, was imprisoned by the Commons for supporting Wilkes, but eventually the Commons dropped the struggle and allowed the reporting of debates. This was followed by the establishment of important newspapers, including the *Morning Post* in 1772 and *The Times* in 1785.

### **Causes of the American War: (1) The Old Colonial System**

Discontent existed in the American colonies long before Grenville raised the question of taxation. This was because of the Old Colonial System, under which the colonies were regarded by the mother-country as useful sources of profit. Economically their function, it was thought, was to send to the mother-country raw materials and other products which could not be produced at home, and also to provide a convenient market for the home country's manufactures. The Old Colonial System was part of the wider Mercantile System, the object of which was to increase the nation's power by the regulation of its economic life.

Under the Navigation Acts of 1651 and 1660 the Americans could use only British or colonial ships; they could not avail themselves of the shipping-facilities offered by Holland, France, or any other country. They also had to send certain 'enumer-



ated' goods to Britain and were not free to export them elsewhere; these included such valuable colonial products as tobacco, sugar, indigo, and cotton. Under other acts the colonies could not make for export any woollen articles; nor could they export hats with furs, although such hats (often of the three-cornered type) were popular at the time and the colonies had a plentiful supply of furs. The manufacture of iron goods, for which Pennsylvania was well suited with its iron ore and its woods, was also restricted. The colonies were free to elect their own assemblies or parliaments; but the Governor and his Council were not responsible to the colonists, and the Mother-Parliament claimed and often exercised the right to legislate for the colonies. Britain had, for example, offended the colonists by reserving wide tracts of land in the west for the use of the Indians.

The Old Colonial System had existed almost from the very foundation of the colonies, but although it had produced much discontent and was indeed the underlying cause of the American revolt, it had so far failed to provoke open rebellion. The system, it should be remembered, in certain respects benefited the colonies as well as the mother-country. The restrictions upon shipping fostered colonial ship-building, especially in Massachusetts, for, although the competition of British shipping interests had to be faced, it was easier to meet this alone than if it were reinforced by competition from other countries as well. The tobacco grower of Virginia was obliged to send all his produce to Britain; but he had the satisfaction of possessing a sure market and was free from outside competition, for the British on their side could smoke only Virginian tobacco. Colonial sugar sent to Britain, mainly from the West Indies, was taxed at a lower rate than sugar from outside the empire; while for certain naval stores exported to Britain, chiefly from the New England states, the mother-country paid bounties. In various ways too the most obnoxious features of the system were often evaded by the colonists; this was particularly true of the importation of French West Indian sugar and molasses into the colonies. These were highly taxed by the mother-



country (to please the British West Indian growers), but the Americans wanted them tax-free to provide themselves with cheap rum. Rather than arouse colonial anger British statesmen, such as Walpole, turned a blind eye upon the consequent smuggling. It should always be remembered that American taxation, begun by Grenville, coincided with a determined effort, also made by Grenville, to tighten up the Old Colonial System. Grenville discovered that the mother-country was spending £7,000 on revenue officers and their cutters to collect £2,000 in taxes. As a lawyer with a narrowly legalistic outlook, and as a Prime Minister faced with a heavy debt-burden after the recent wars, he was doubly shocked. He enrolled new customs officers and increased coastguards and revenue-cutters.

On the whole, Britain treated her colonies better than Spain, France, or Portugal treated theirs. But perhaps the greater freedom enjoyed by the British colonies, coupled with the liberty-loving traditions surrounding their establishment in the seventeenth century, served to stimulate their desire for complete independence. So long as the colonies needed the protection of the mother-country against French ambitions and Indian tomahawks they were hardly likely to revolt. But the Seven Years' War had destroyed French power in America, and the colonial was prepared to take his chances (as he often had to, even with the British connexion) against Indians on the warpath.

Finally, it should be remembered that the traditions of the thirteen colonies were very different, their religions mutually antagonistic (till the eighteenth century introduced ideas of toleration), and their ways of life widely dissimilar. But when Grenville and his successors tightened up the Old Colonial System and superimposed upon it fresh taxation, the necessary cement was supplied to lay the foundations of the United States of America.

### **Causes of the American War: (2) Taxation**

George Grenville, Prime Minister 1763-1765, was faced with a huge National Debt as a result of the Seven Years' War. With some justification he decided that the Americans should



contribute towards the cost of the small British army still kept against possible Red Indian attacks or even the recrudescence of the French danger. The estimated annual cost of this army was £350,000, and Grenville proposed that the colonies should contribute £100,000. He suggested a stamp duty to raise the money, but he gave the colonies over a year to devise any alternative method. When they failed to respond Grenville passed his Stamp Act (1765), which obliged the colonists to put stamps on newspapers, licences, leases, and other legal documents. There was immediate opposition. The colonists argued that it was tyrannical that a Parliament in which they were not represented should attempt to tax them—an attitude soon crystallized in the slogan, "No taxation without representation." George III and Grenville were repeating the rôles of Charles I and Wentworth; they then would imitate John Hampden and refuse to pay. Riots occurred, and the death's head appeared on newspapers instead of the hated stamps. Soon afterwards Grenville, whose Whig views on the monarchy offended the King, was forced to resign.



A STAMP OF 1765

The King chose as his next Prime Minister a young Whig nobleman, the Marquis of Rockingham (1765–1766). Rockingham was considerably more enlightened and honest than the average eighteenth-century politician and was ably advised by his Irish secretary, Edmund Burke, for whom he found a seat in Parliament. Rockingham made repeated efforts to enlist the services of Pitt; but Pitt was too touchy over certain personal questions; and unfortunately the two statesmen who might have succeeded in conciliating the Americans never worked together. In 1766 Rockingham repealed the Stamp Act; but the good results of this were nullified by the Declaratory Act, passed at the same time on the insistence of the King, which declared that Britain had the right to tax her colonies if she wished. In the same year George got rid of Rockingham.



The next ministry was one of the strangest in our history. As a non-party man and an opponent of the corrupt Whig cliques, Pitt had much to recommend him to the King, who persuaded the great statesman of the Seven Years' War to form a ministry. The tragedy of Pitt's second ministry (1766-1768) is in marked contrast to the triumph of his first. By accepting the title of Earl of Chatham the 'Great Commoner' lost much of his former popularity. In reality, Pitt's failing health justified his retirement to the relative ease of the House of Lords, but there were some who thought he had succumbed to royal patronage and was now a 'king's man.' In accordance with his oft-declared views on party government, he chose his ministers from many different political groups.

He made an administration, so checkered and speckled; he put together a piece of joinery, so crossly indented and whimsically dovetailed; a cabinet so variously inlaid; such a piece of diversified mosaic; such a tessellated pavement without cement; here a bit of black stone, and there a bit of white; patriots and courtiers, king's friends and republicans; Whigs and Tories; treacherous friends and open enemies;—that it was indeed a very curious show; but utterly unsafe to touch, and unsure to stand on. (Edmund Burke: *Speech on American Taxation.*)

Such an ill-assorted ministry sorely needed a strong hand to keep it together. This Chatham could not supply, for during these critical years he was at times prostrate with gout and nervous disorders, and more often to be seen at Bath than at Westminster. In these circumstances Chatham's ministry fell to pieces.

This explains why Charles Townshend, Chancellor of the Exchequer and grandson of 'Turnip' Townshend of Walpole's time, was able to reopen the question of American taxation (1767). Townshend proposed to raise £40,000 a year by taxing tea, paper, glass, and painters' colours entering America. He justified his action by pointing out that the Stamp Act had been opposed because it had levied *internal* taxes, whereas the colonists had never seriously questioned the right of the mother-country to levy taxes on exports and imports for



the regulation of trade. The colonists retorted that Townshend's new taxes were not chiefly intended to regulate trade but to raise a revenue. Townshend died soon afterwards, leaving others to face the music. Chatham resigned, and for two years (1768–1770) Grafton's government became the target for every opponent of royalist influence and Parliamentary corruption. In 1770 George III's alleged misdeeds during the past ten years—his abuse of royal patronage, his attacks on party government, his use of 'King's Friends' to embarrass successive governments—were summed up by Burke in his *Thoughts on the Causes of the Present Discontents*.

In 1770 Grafton was succeeded by Lord North, whose ministry marked the rise to power of a new Tory party. North was a tactful and amiable man who passed the statesmanlike Regulating Act for India (1773) and Quebec Act for Canada (1774). His relaxation of the laws against Roman Catholics provoked the foolish Gordon Riots (1780). If he had had his way, a more conciliatory policy towards America would have been pursued. Unfortunately he was weak-willed. During his ministry (1770–1782) the royal influence reached its height and George was practically his own Prime Minister.

In 1770 North repealed all of Townshend's taxes except that on tea. "I am clear there must always be one tax to keep up the right; and as such I approve of the tea duty," wrote the King to his Prime Minister. As this failed to appease the colonists, North decided to allow the export of tea direct from India to America, thus saving a duty of 1s. a lb. which the tea paid when it was sent *via* Britain. This showed a complete misunderstanding of the American case, which was based on the principle of taxation and not on the amount.

### **Causes of the American War: (3) Disturbances**

Inflamed feelings soon produced disturbances that heralded the coming war. In 1770 a party of British soldiers, goaded by insults and snowballs, fired on a crowd at Boston and killed several civilians. This 'Boston massacre' produced intense indignation throughout Massachusetts. Two years later a



revenue-cutter, the *Gaspée*, used by Britain to check smuggling, was boarded by some colonials and burnt. Then in 1773, when Lord North's cheap tea arrived in Boston harbour, the ships were boarded by young colonists dressed as Red Indians, and the chests were thrown overboard. As a result of the 'Boston Tea Party' Britain passed acts closing the port of Boston and depriving Massachusetts of its charter. The colony was not allowed to elect its own assembly and was forced to provide quarters for British troops. Alarmed lest they should suffer a similar fate, all the other colonies (except, for the time being, Georgia) joined with Massachusetts in sending representatives to a Congress at Philadelphia (1774). Despite a strong royalist party, 'minute men' (liable to serve at a minute's notice) were enrolled for colonial defence. In 1775 a skirmish took place at Lexington. War had begun.

### **Who was to blame?**

On behalf of the mother-country it can be argued that the Old Colonial System conferred certain benefits on the colonies; that the proposed taxation was small in amount and was only a slight contribution towards the cost of defending America; that the colonies were repeatedly offered the choice of raising their contribution by their own methods; that it was difficult to arrange colonial representation in the House of Commons with a six-weeks' journey intervening; and that on the whole Britain treated her colonies better than other mother-countries treated theirs.

The colonists, on the other hand, could point to the undoubted injustices of the Old Colonial System, and could argue that it was unjust for Parliament, many thousands of miles away and in which they were not represented, to levy taxes upon them. They claimed that they were opposing tyranny as surely as Pym, Hampden, and Cromwell had opposed it in the mother-country over a century before. It must be remembered, however, that George III was not alone in his desire to tax America; many of his subjects supported his policy.

The two most vigorous opponents of American taxation in



this country were Chatham and Burke. Chatham took his stand on the cry of "No taxation without representation," asserting that the mother-country had no *right* to tax the colonists. Burke was on surer grounds when he urged that legal rights one way or the other should be put on one side and the country should ask itself: (Is it wise to insist on the right of taxation if by so doing we lose our empire?)

### **The War of American Independence: Lexington to Saratoga**

In April, 1775, the British commander, General Gage, while seizing a quantity of stores collected by the rebels, was resisted by 'minute men' at Lexington near Boston. In the same year Gage attacked a force of colonials that was strongly entrenched on Bunker Hill overlooking Boston; the British redcoats gained their objective, but their frontal attack cost them many casualties and the colonists were greatly encouraged. Soon afterwards Gage was succeeded by Howe, and the British government despatched hired German mercenaries to reinforce the regulars.

In 1776 the colonial Congress at Philadelphia appointed George Washington as supreme commander of the American forces. Washington, a Virginian planter, had already seen service in the Seven Years' War; but it was his personality and character that proved of greater value to the colonists than his military skill. The Americans were by no means united, the southern states being more loyal than the northern to Britain; while the rebels themselves were torn by jealousies and dissensions and had to raise an army almost out of nothing. Washington's undoubted integrity, his firmness of purpose, his perseverance and courage eventually succeeded in overcoming all these obstacles. His leadership was in marked contrast to that of the inefficient and uninspiring British leaders, both at home and abroad.

On July 4, 1776, the anniversary of which is still celebrated in the U.S.A. as Independence Day, the Philadelphia Congress issued their Declaration of Independence. In memorable words



the rebels asserted the right of men to decide their own form of government and the determination of the Americans to sever their connexion with Britain:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it."

*When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for <sup>one</sup> people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to ~~assume among the powers of the earth the equal and independent station to which the laws of nature & of nature's God entitle them.~~ <sup>separate and equal</sup> ~~which the laws of nature & of nature's God entitle them.~~ <sup>station to</sup> ~~to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.~~*

*We hold these truths to be <sup>self-evident</sup> ~~clear~~ <sup>that</sup> all men are created equal, ~~independent~~ <sup>that they are endowed by their creator with equal rights</sup> ~~unalienable~~ <sup>that from that equal creation they derive</sup> ~~unalienable~~ <sup>rights</sup> ~~life, liberty, & the pursuit of happiness;~~ <sup>life, liberty, & the pursuit of happiness;</sup> ~~that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it.~~*

#### OPENING LINES OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

A reduced facsimile of the first lines of Jefferson's original draft

Reproduced from "European History," by Professor Hutton Webster

Meanwhile the British commander Howe had moved his headquarters from Boston to the more favourable atmosphere of New York, where, however, he proceeded to waste valuable time instead of destroying Washington's forces. At home Lord George Germain was planning to separate the rebellious New England colonies from the more loyal southern states. His scheme provided that General Burgoyne should march south from Canada, capture Ticonderoga (which had fallen into rebel hands) and enter the Hudson valley. There he would be joined



by Howe's forces, moved north from New York, and, with the Hudson valley under their control, the British would be able to isolate the New England states. The scheme was admirable but was never executed. Howe failed to receive proper instructions from home, and, instead of entering the Hudson valley, moved south to defeat Washington at Brandywine (1777) and to occupy Philadelphia. Consequently when Burgoyne, having captured Ticonderoga, entered the Hudson valley, he found himself unsupported. Instead of allies he met a hostile population and an American army much larger than his own. In October, 1777, he was obliged to surrender with 3,500 men and all his equipment at Saratoga.

### **The War continued: Saratoga to Yorktown**

The surrender at Saratoga played into the hands of the American scientist and philosopher, Benjamin Franklin, who was at Versailles trying to persuade France to enter the war and avenge her defeat in the Seven Years' War. In the spring of 1778 France declared war on Britain. In the same year the Earl of Chatham, architect of the British empire in America, died. Just before his death he struggled on crutches to the House of Lords where he made his last speech urging peace with the colonists and war to the death with France to prevent "the dismemberment of this most ancient and noble monarchy." In 1779 Britain was at war with Spain; in 1780 with Holland; while the Baltic powers, led by Russia, Denmark, and Sweden, formed an Armed Neutrality to prevent British warships from interfering with their trade with America. French soldiers now reinforced the American rebels. Most important of all, French, Spanish, and Dutch naval power threatened and at times captured our command of the sea.

After Saratoga the new British commander, Clinton, adopted tactics more suited to colonial warfare, and he also concentrated his efforts upon the southern states so as to detach the loyal elements there from the more rebellious north. In 1780 he captured Charleston, the capital of Carolina, and then retired north to New York, leaving Cornwallis to continue the struggle



in the south. At this stage everything seemed to go wrong for Britain; control of the sea was lost, large French reinforcements arrived in America, and the British forces, naval and military, failed to co-ordinate their efforts. Cornwallis was obliged to retreat to the coast where he sought refuge at Yorktown overlooking Chesapeake Bay. He expected a British fleet to evacuate his army to safer quarters. Instead a French fleet under de Grasse appeared. Meanwhile Washington had deceived Clinton at New York with false information and had transferred his American and French troops to the south. Cornwallis found himself hemmed in on land and sea and had to surrender with about 7,000 men (October, 1781). The disaster at Yorktown practically ended the war in America. In 1782, Lord North, realizing the hopelessness of the situation, insisted on resigning, and it was left to others to make terms of peace. Before then important events had occurred at sea.

### **The War at Sea**

Not the least of George III's misdeeds was his neglect of the navy in the early part of his reign. Ships rotted through neglect and money voted for the navy was embezzled. Lord Sandwich, in charge of the Admiralty, was so fond of gaming and of cards that he is credited with the invention of 'sandwiches' to save himself the time spent on supper.

None the less, in the early years of the war Britain maintained her naval supremacy; but after the intervention of France, followed by Spain and Holland, the position altered. Sandwich abandoned the Pitt tradition of blockading the enemy ports close in, while the French adopted the disconcerting tactics of firing from their guns "not honest cannon balls, but dumb-bells, sickles, reaping hooks, long bars, shearing tools, scythe blades, and scrap iron."<sup>1</sup> These they aimed at the British masts, sails, and rigging, and when they had thus quickly disabled their opponents they avoided battle and went about their business. It was thus that the French had obtained control of the sea before Yorktown.

<sup>1</sup> Callender: *The Naval Side of British History*.



After a few years the British position at sea was becoming desperate. A French fleet under de Suffren sailed the Indian Ocean and, aided by Franco-Indian intrigues on the mainland, threatened to reverse the decision of the Seven Years' War; fortunately Admiral Hughes and Warren Hastings (see Chapter XIX) were able to counter both these moves. The Spaniards laid siege to Gibraltar, which was defended for three years (1779-1782) by Sir George Elliot. Nearer home, enemy fleets appeared in the Channel, while the American naval commander Paul Jones daringly surprised the garrison at Whitehaven and sank British warships off Scarborough.

In 1780 Rodney gained sorely needed victories off Spain and in the West Indies. In 1781, during Rodney's absence on sick leave, the French gained the control of the sea that led to Yorktown, and practically all the British West Indian islands fell into enemy hands. In 1782 the British lost Minorca. Then the tide turned. Kempenfelt produced a new *Book of Signals* based on the principle of listing certain key words as numbers and of having different flags to denote different figures. By this means orders could be given from the flagship in greater detail and with more speed and accuracy. Kempenfelt and many hundreds of sailors lost their lives when the *Royal George*—(Admiral Hawke's old flag-ship at Quiberon Bay which had become unseaworthy through neglect) suddenly sank during repairs in Portsmouth harbour—a tragedy that forms the theme of Cowper's poem *Toll for the Brave*. But the *Book of Signals* was complete and soon proved its usefulness when Lord Hawke shepherded a convoy to relieve Gibraltar in 1782. Across the Atlantic Rodney engaged de Grasse off the small West Indian islands known as the Saints (1782), and, by taking advantage of a sudden change of wind, defeated the French by breaking the enemy's line, a manœuvre later made famous by Nelson.

### **The Treaty of Versailles (1783)**

Lord North had resigned in 1782, following the surrender at Yorktown. He was succeeded by the Whig Lord Rockingham (February-July, 1782). During his ministry Parliament passed



an important act, introduced by Burke, which cut down the number of sinecures open to members of Parliament. This diminished the possibilities of governmental and royalist corruption. Rockingham died in July, 1782, and was succeeded by Lord Shelburne. It was his ministry (1782-1783) which concluded the war by the Treaty of Versailles.

Britain acknowledged the independence of the United States of America. In the West Indies there was a general restoration of conquests, except that France obtained Tobago and St Lucia. France also received back Senegal in West Africa, which Britain had obtained in 1763, while her possession of Goree was also confirmed. As for Spain, she obtained Minorca and Florida, which Britain had gained in 1713 and 1763 respectively. The terms were a bitter blow to Britain and demonstrated the importance of sea-power in colonial warfare.

### **The Broad Results of the War**

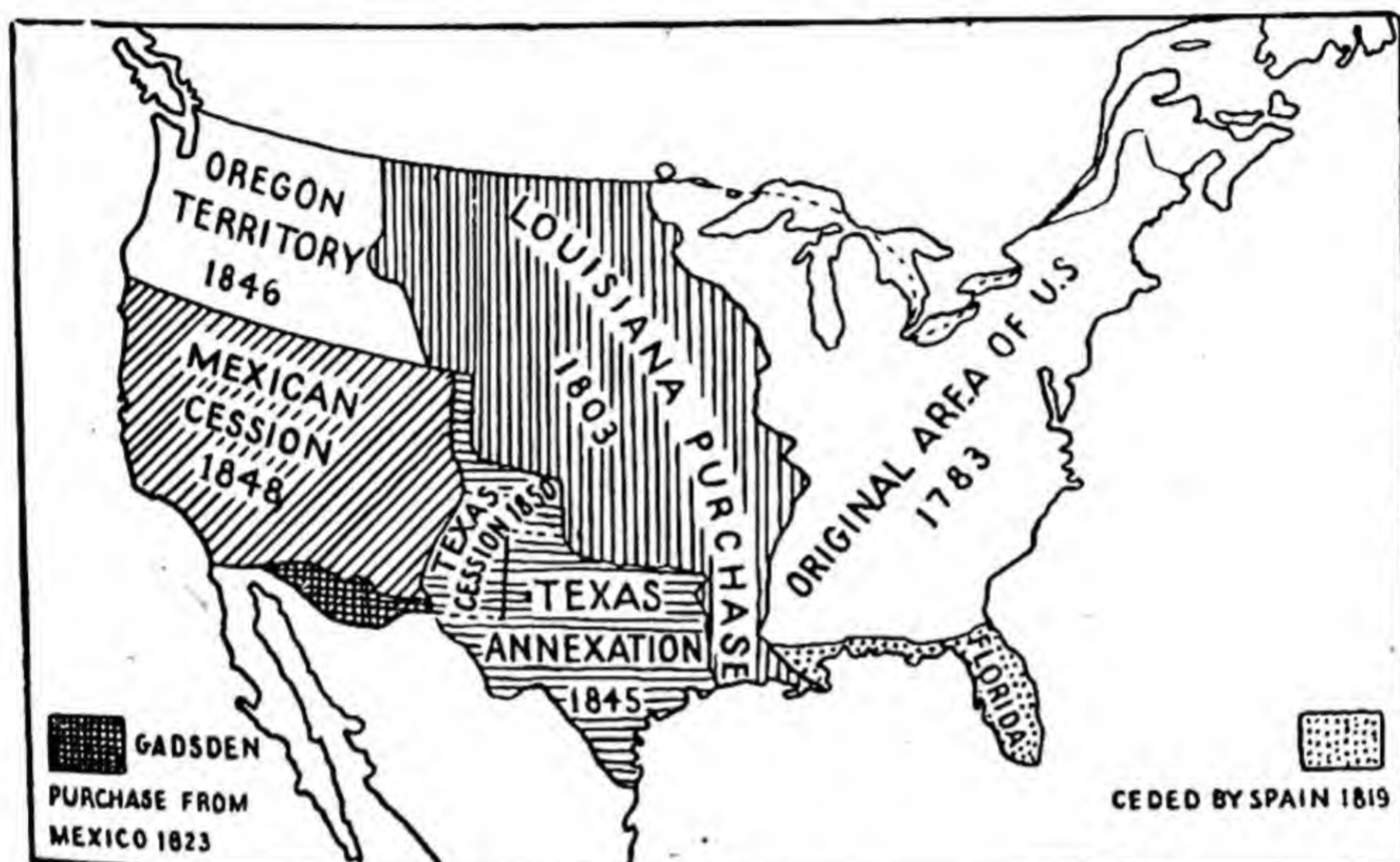
The most important result of the war was the creation of the United States of America. In 1787 the new country adopted a federal constitution under which the thirteen states retained much of their original independence but agreed to place themselves under a President and Congress for the more important matters of government. Washington was chosen as the first President. After his first term of four years he was elected again; but he refused a third term—a precedent followed by his successors till 1940 when President Roosevelt, in view of the world crisis, consented to stand for a third term. It is said that Washington's coat of arms supplied the stars and stripes for the new national flag. Originally each of the thirteen states was represented by one star and one stripe. In the nineteenth century the U.S.A. expanded westward and reached the Pacific. The number of states has reached forty-eight and the number of stars has been correspondingly increased, but the stripes remain at the original thirteen.

The loss of the American colonies dealt a shattering blow to the old ideas of empire. For long afterwards the view prevailed that colonies were more nuisance than they were worth; they



were compared to pears that when ripe would just drop from the mother-tree.

As a result of the war George III's unpopularity increased, and his attempt to revive the royal power was discredited. This was only natural, although the King had not been alone in his efforts to coerce the American colonies. But the criticisms



### THE GROWTH OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The outstanding fact in the history of the U.S.A. during the nineteenth century was its expansion westward. This was the work of the pioneers who developed qualities of self-reliance and impatience of governmental control which have distinguished the American national character ever since. The U.S.A. government acquired the necessary territory in four main stages:

1. Louisiana Purchase, 1803. This vast territory became Spanish by the Treaty of Paris, 1763. Napoleon forced Spain to yield it to France. As it contained New Orleans, the outlet for the Mississippi basin, it was of vital importance to the States which obliged Napoleon (about to renew the war against Britain) to sell it to them for 15 million dollars.
2. Texas annexation, 1845. Texas, originally Mexican, revolted against Mexico and was later annexed by the U.S.A.
3. Oregon, 1846. This resulted from the Oregon Treaty with Britain, 1846, which extended the 49th parallel as the Canadian-U.S.A. boundary from the Rockies to the Pacific.
4. Mexican Cession, 1848. This resulted from the Mexican War, 1846, which followed the U.S.A.'s annexation of Texas.

levelled by Burke, Fox, and Wilkes against the royal policy in both England and America seemed now more justified. In 1780 the Commons passed Dunning's resolution, "That the influence of the Crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished." After 1783 it did diminish. This was due partly to the King's failing health and partly to the ability of his new minister, William Pitt the Younger; but the immediate cause



was the American War, which, it has been said, was fought for the liberties of Britons as well as Americans.

Finally the American War helped Ireland under the leadership of Henry Grattan to achieve an independent Parliament (1782); while it served as an object-lesson for the discontented in France and thus prepared the way for the French Revolution (1789).

### QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Write notes on: *The Idea of a Patriot King, North Briton, Thoughts on the Causes of the Present Discontent.*
2. Describe the main issues of constitutional government or of personal freedom raised by the activities of John Wilkes.
3. Write a life of William Pitt the Elder, Earl of Chatham.
4. Describe George III's aims and methods of achieving them during the first ten years of his reign (1760-1770).
5. Summarize the causes of the American War of Independence.
6. Write down (a) three reasons justifying the British attitude, (b) three reasons justifying the colonial attitude, during the years preceding the American War. Follow this by a class discussion on who was the more to blame.
7. Describe briefly the importance in the American War of Independence of the events associated with: Saratoga, Yorktown, Gibraltar, the Saints.



## CHAPTER IV

### GEORGIAN ENGLAND

#### **Town and Country Life**

IN 1750 the population of England and Wales was about seven millions, most of whom lived in the south and supported themselves by agriculture and cottage industries. The village dictators were the squire (the counterpart of the medieval lord of the manor) and the parson. The squire, like Sir Roger de Coverley in Addison and Steele, was usually a Justice of the Peace, administering the law to his neighbours and helping in the government of his county. Communications were primitive and dangerous, with 'gentlemen of the road' like Jack Sheppard or Dick Turpin waylaying the unwary traveller.

Town life was a mixture of gentility and coarseness. At one end were silks and satins, powder and puffs, wigs and patches, with Beau Nash holding his court at the fashionable watering-town of Bath; at the other end were dirt and squalor, gin-drinking and prize-fighting. Gambling and hard drinking were common to all classes; cock-fighting and bull- or bear-baiting indicated the low moral tone of the nation. Village cricket was growing in popularity, the first cricket club, the Hambledon, being formed in 1750, and the world famous Marylebone Cricket Club (M.C.C.) in 1787. The universities were at a low ebb; the future historian Gibbon made frequent excursions from Oxford to London without even being missed. The gentry did much to fill the gap left by the ancient seats of learning. In 1753 the collection of rare books made by Sir Hans Sloane marked the beginning of the British Museum. Many of the gentry 'finished' their education with the Grand Tour of Europe, and foreign influences upon English culture were in consequence strong.

#### **Georgian Literature : Prose**

In prose the most remarkable fact was the appearance of the



English novel, which developed out of the romances and adventure stories written at the beginning of the century. In 1719 Defoe published his *Robinson Crusoe*, the most famous of a number of tales produced by this versatile genius. In 1726 the Irish Tory, Dean Swift, published *Gulliver's Travels*, intended as a satire upon mankind in general and upon Georgian England in particular. Walpole and the Whigs are ridiculed under a thin veil of disguise, while the wars between England and France are satirized in the conflict between those who crack their eggs at the big end and those who prefer the little end. The first real novel (in the sense of a study of character rather than a description of adventure) appeared with the publication of Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* in 1740. Two years later Henry Fielding published *Joseph Andrews*; but his greatest novel was *Tom Jones*, which appeared in 1749. The most readable of all eighteenth-century novels is probably *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766), the work of the good-natured Irishman, Oliver Goldsmith.

Goldsmith also achieved fame as an essayist, thus carrying on the traditions of Addison and Steele. His straightforward style and simple language appeal much more to the modern reader than the ponderous diction of his famous contemporary, Samuel Johnson, whose essays are now but little read. In 1776 Edward Gibbon published the first volume of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, the greatest historical work in the English language; while Adam Smith began the modern study of political economy in *The Wealth of Nations*.

The middle of the century was dominated by the strong personality of Dr Johnson. His works are but little read now, but he enjoys the distinction of having produced, in 1755, the first English Dictionary. In Boswell's *Life of Johnson* the doctor lives again with his downright opinions on every subject under the sun, his insatiable thirst for tea, his strange habits of touching the posts as he walked and collecting pieces of orange peel, and his supreme contempt for all Whigs, Scotsmen, and foreigners.



## Georgian Literature: Poetry and Drama

Till his death in 1744 the dominating figure in English poetry was Alexander Pope. His translation of Homer, his *Essay on Criticism*, his *Essay on Man*, and many other poems contain epigrams that have passed into the currency of modern speech:

A little learning is a dangerous thing.  
Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.  
The proper study of mankind is man.  
Hope springs eternal in the human breast.

Towards the middle of the century James Thompson led a revolt against Pope's heroic couplets and descriptions of city life. In 1756 Gray published his *Elegy written in a Country Churchyard*, which James Wolfe declared he would rather have written than capture Quebec.

Twenty years later Goldsmith's *Deserted Village* lamented the growing commercialism of his age. William Cowper's long poem *The Task* appeared in 1785; few read it nowadays compared with those who delight in his exciting *Ride of John Gilpin* or those many more who find comfort in his hymn beginning:

God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform.

English drama owes a great debt to the eighteenth century. David Garrick (1717-1779) and later Mrs Siddons (1755-1831) made acting an honoured profession. Shakespeare's plays, for long neglected, were revived, and in 1769 Garrick instituted the Shakespearian Festival at Stratford-on-Avon. The century also produced its own drama. Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* has proved as popular in the twentieth century as it was in the eighteenth century. The versatile Goldsmith is remembered for *She stoops to conquer*. Another Irishman, Richard Sheridan, wrote *The School for Scandal* and *The Rivals*, which still delight the modern playgoer. The latter contains the immortal Mrs Malaprop with her amusing malapropisms.



## Music and Painting

Elizabethan England had been a 'nest of singing birds' and Restoration England had produced Purcell, but in the eighteenth century there were no great English composers. Germany was the home of music, with Handel and Bach in the middle of the century, and Mozart and Beethoven at the end.



*THE RAKE'S LEVEE (HOGARTH)*

The above scene from *The Rake's Progress* shows the rake, who has inherited an unexpected fortune. He is beset by flatterers anxious for his custom. A dancing-master, fiddle in hand, prances on the rake's right. On his left a villainous-looking ruffian discusses the details of some shady business. In front kneels a jockey holding a bowl ornamented with race-horses. The figure at the harpsichord is said to be that of Handel.

Handel was nurtured by England, however. He lived here almost continuously from 1710 till his death in 1759, and during this half-century composed his greatest works, including his oratorio, *The Messiah*, which was first performed in Dublin in 1742. In the following year he composed a *Te Deum* in honour of George II's victory at Dettingen.

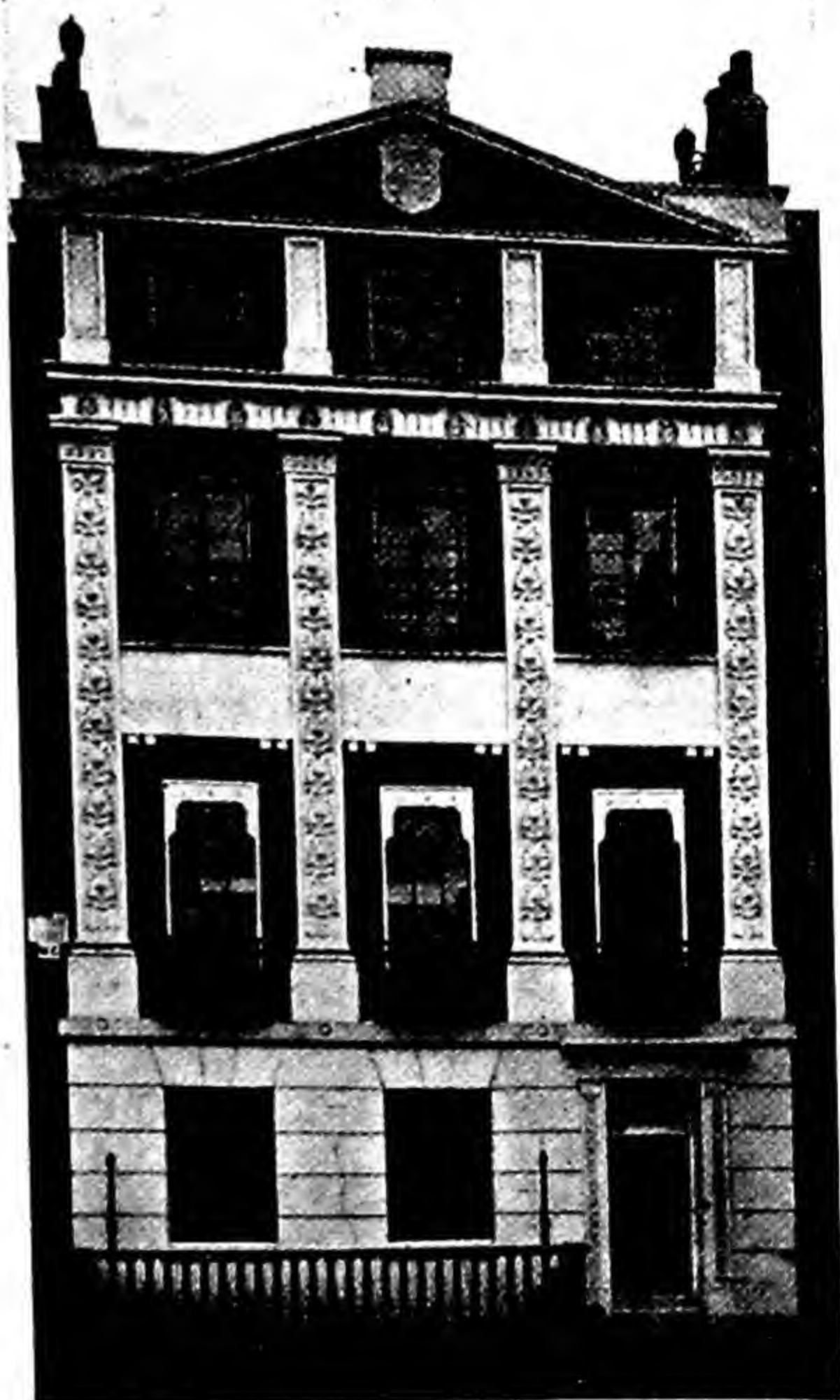


Painting followed an exactly opposite course. Hitherto English court painters had been of foreign origin, mainly Dutch, Flemish, or German. In the eighteenth century the first English school of painting arose, beginning with William Hogarth. In two pictures entitled *Beer Street* and *Gin Lane* he caricatures contemporary drinking-customs. The dwellers in Beer Street are happy, mirthful, and healthy-looking; they quaff their liquor with evident enjoyment, and the pawnshop attracts no customers. In Gin Lane the story is different; here the pawnshop does a roaring trade, the gin-drinkers lie about drunk and insensible, and their lives are cut short by accident, disease, and suicide.

The second half of the century was the heyday of English portrait-painting. Sir Joshua Reynolds, Thomas Gainsborough, and George Romney have left a veritable portrait-gallery of their age for later ages to admire. Gainsborough also founded modern English landscape-painting. In 1768 the Royal Academy was formed with Reynolds as its first President.

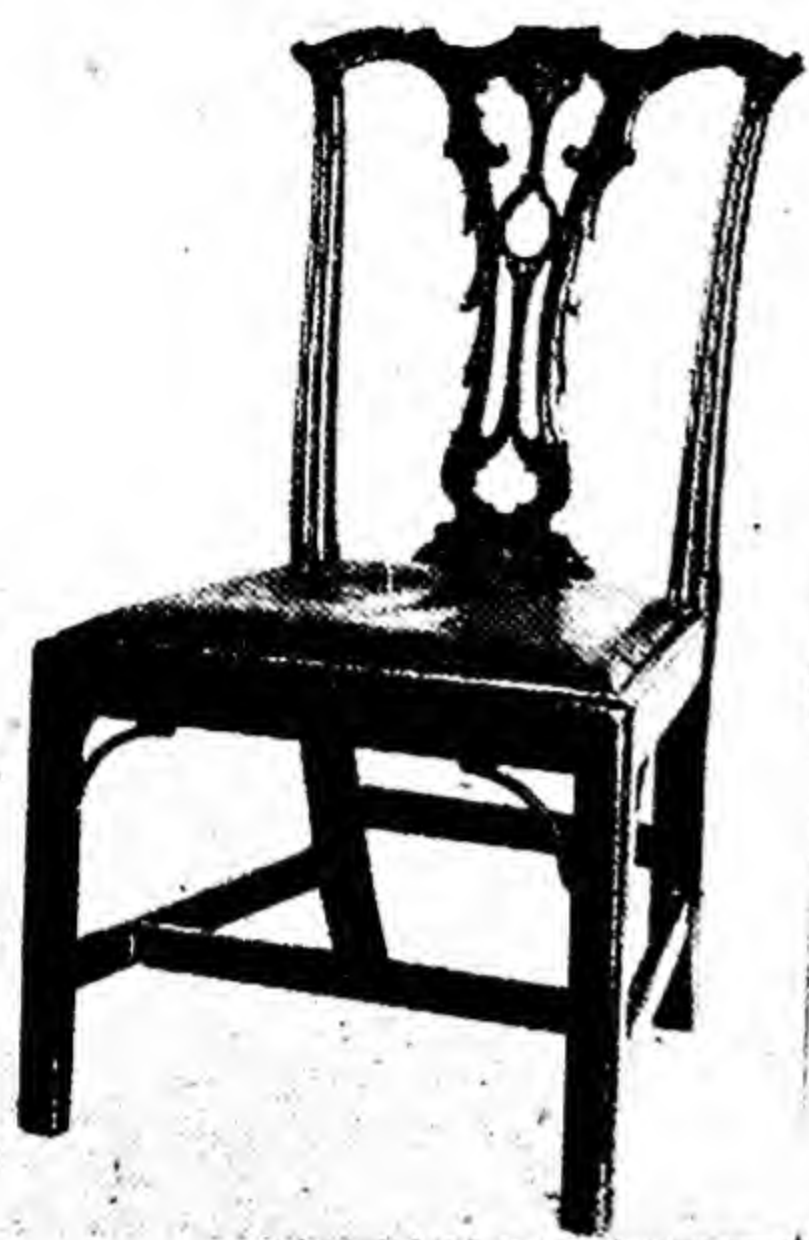
### Architecture

Sir Christopher Wren died in 1723, but the classical or Renaissance style of which he was England's greatest exponent continued for another century. Most Georgian buildings were in one of two styles: either the distinctively classical with



A CHARACTERISTIC ADAM HOUSE  
No. 7, Adam Street, Adelphi





A CHIPPENDALE CHAIR  
Victoria and Albert Museum  
Crown Copyright reserved

stone columns, porticoes, and perhaps a dome; or else the red-brick style, commonly used for houses with their large rectangular windows and spacious rooms. The Radcliffe Library, Oxford, designed by James Gibbs, is a good example of the former; Kensington Palace a good example of the latter. Much of Bath was planned and built at this time, while in London the brothers Adam were erecting their classical buildings and adorning the interiors with rich panelling and well-designed fireplaces. Neat well-trimmed 'Dutch' gardens and expanses of

tree-studded parkland provided a fitting setting for the houses of the well-to-do, while inside might be found examples of Josiah Wedgwood's pottery and of the delicately carved furniture of Chippendale, Hepplewhite, or Sheraton.

### The Methodist Revival

The eighteenth century was singularly lacking in religious zeal, and abuses like pluralism and absenteeism abounded. Towards the middle of the century, however, a remarkable revival took place.

John Wesley (1703-1791) and his brother Charles were the sons of a Lincolnshire clergyman. While at Oxford they, together with George Whitefield and others, formed a society to hold prayer-meetings, observe fasts, visit the sick and poor, and attend Holy Communion once a week. Such zeal was unusual, and the regularity of their religious observances earned them the nickname of 'Methodists.' John Wesley, after being ordained as a Church of England clergyman, was elected a fellow of Lincoln College; but the comfortable habits of university life made little appeal to him, and in 1735 he went out to the newly founded colony of Georgia to undertake missionary



work among the colonists (largely ex-paupers) and Indians. His uncompromising outlook made his mission a failure and in 1737 he returned to England. In the following year he came under the influence of the German Moravian sect, and in 1739 he began his life's work of carrying his message to the people. At the invitation of Whitefield he began to preach to the miners of Kingswood, near Bristol, and there he established the first Methodist chapel.

Methodism was the work mainly of John Wesley, a man of untiring energy, undaunted zeal, and unusual organizing ability. For the next fifty years he preached far and wide, braving all seasons and weathers and every kind of opposition. Travelling mainly on horseback, he covered about 250,000 miles in the course of his journeys and preached over 40,000 sermons. London was his headquarters whence he set out for the coal-mines and foundries of Newcastle-on-Tyne in the north, and the coal-mines of Somerset and tin-mines of Cornwall in the south-west. His open-air meetings in fields and on moorlands attracted many thousands. He soon drew up rules to organize the movement he had created. The country was divided into circuits, and, reminiscent of their founder's own journeyings, Methodist ministers still travel from circuit to circuit every few years. Whitefield was an even more powerful orator than John Wesley. His audiences sometimes numbered over 30,000, and many, including at times the speaker himself, were moved to tears. John's brother, Charles, was noted for his singing and hymn-writing; the best known of his many compositions is the hymn beginning "Jesu, lover of my soul."

John Wesley's *Journal* records the opposition the early Methodists often had to face. Disorderly mobs broke up their meetings and assaulted the speakers. Though Wesley taught no new doctrines incompatible with those of the Anglican church, the whole tone of his revival inevitably led to a rupture. His emphasis on the personal nature of religious faith minimized the importance of the priesthood: so too did his creation of lay-preachers to assist in the work of preaching. Wesley's energies burst the bounds of many restrictions that centuries of



custom had made almost sacrosanct. Instead of one sermon a week, he preached a score; instead of awaiting his congregation in church he went forth to create it; instead of confining his activities to one parish, he proclaimed, "The world is my parish." In 1783 he began to ordain ministers to carry on his work, an act clearly incompatible with continued membership of the Anglican church. But Wesley remained officially a member till his death.

None the less a new religious body had been formed. At Wesley's death it numbered 60,000 and was larger than all the other Nonconformist bodies put together. By the end of the century many Anglicans were stirred by Wesley's trumpet-call to personal religion, and an Evangelical movement arose inside the Church of England. No doubt much of Wesley's teaching was severe and joyless, and his appeal was based overmuch on the fear of eternal damnation. But he brought spiritual comfort to thousands whose material lives were mean and sordid, he created a renewed interest in missionary work, and his labours for the poor contributed powerfully towards the growing humanitarianism of the age. Before Wesley died prison-reform had been begun by John Howard, the first Sunday School had been founded at Gloucester by Robert Raikes, and the anti-slavery agitation of William Wilberforce and his fellow-Evangelicals was winning converts.

### **The Gordon Riots (1780)**

That the cry of "No Popery" could still inflame the people into an outbreak of hooliganism was shown by the Gordon Riots. Roman Catholics were still excluded from the benefits of religious toleration and their activities severely restricted. In practice they were often allowed to worship quietly, but when an act was passed in 1778 repealing some of the harshest restrictions, the old anti-papal prejudices of the people were aroused. In 1780 the London mob, led by a half-crazy nobleman named Lord George Gordon, rose in riot. For nearly a week London was the scene of every kind of excess and savagery uncurbed by any police force. Parliament was stormed,



Catholic chapels destroyed, Newgate Prison emptied of its undesirables, and, what suited everyone's taste, breweries were looted. The magistrates were afraid to read the Riot Act or take action, the chief credit for ending the disorders belonging to George III, who personally ordered out the military with instructions to shoot. Gordon died soon afterwards in Newgate.

### QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. In what respects was the eighteenth century more brutal and coarse than our own? Illustrate the growth of humanitarianism towards the end of the century.
2. Write short notes on the following books: *Gulliver's Travels*, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, *The Wealth of Nations*.
3. What aspect of eighteenth-century life or culture is illustrated by each of the following: Pope, Fielding, Handel, Hogarth, the Adam brothers, Johnson, Chippendale, Garrick, Reynolds?
4. Give an account of the Methodist revival and estimate its effects upon English life.



## PART II

# POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REVOLUTIONS (1783-1815)

### INTRODUCTION

#### **The European Background (1789-1815)**

FROM 1789 to 1815 the history of Britain, in common with that of every other country in Europe, was closely affected by events in France, where the great French Revolution had broken out in 1789.

Under the *ancien régime* the power of the French king was unchecked and the French Parliament or States General had not met since 1614. The first two estates of the realm (clergy and nobility) enjoyed undeserved privileges such as exemption from taxation, while the taxes of the third estate (artisans and peasants) had to support in luxury and extravagance the court of Versailles and an idle nobility. Such injustices were exposed by Voltaire, who attacked in particular the privileges of the Catholic Church, and by Rousseau, whose *Social Contract* opened, trumpet-like, with the bold assertion that "Man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains." Faced with national bankruptcy, Louis XVI summoned the States General in May, 1789. On July 14 the Paris mob stormed the old French prison, the Bastille. The revolution had begun. Feudal privileges were swept away, the Church subordinated to the State, Louis XVI deposed (1792) and executed (1793)—and the Queen, Marie Antoinette, also guillotined. In the Reign of Terror thousands of people were sent to the guillotine.

These events challenged the old order and made kings and princes tremble for their thrones. In 1792 Austria and Prussia declared war on France and in 1793 were joined by Britain. Between 1793 and 1815 four coalitions were formed against France, but for long she was saved by her new-born patriotism



and revolutionary ardour and by the military genius of Napoleon.

In 1796–1797 Napoleon defeated Austria in North Italy and Britain alone was left of the First Coalition. After an expedition to Egypt (1798)—frustrated by Nelson's victory at the Nile—Napoleon returned to France and defeated the Second Coalition in 1800. In 1802 Britain and France concluded the Peace of Amiens. When war was renewed in 1803 Napoleon concentrated upon the invasion of England, but his plans were again frustrated by British sea-power (Trafalgar, 1805). Napoleon, however, was able to overthrow the Third Coalition by defeating Austria at Austerlitz (1805), Prussia at Jena (1806), and Russia at Friedland (1807). Napoleon's mastery of Europe was recognized by the Tsar in the Treaty of Tilsit (1807). But soon revolts broke out in Spain and Portugal, and the Peninsular War (1808–1814) drained Napoleon's strength and encouraged other nations to revolt. In 1812 Napoleon invaded Russia and had to retreat, disastrously, from Moscow. The result was the Fourth Coalition and the War of Liberation. Napoleon was defeated at Leipzig (1813) and exiled to Elba. In 1815 he escaped back to France but was defeated at Waterloo. He was then exiled to St Helena, where he died in 1821.

Although, on the face of things, the old Europe had by 1815 triumphed over the Revolution, this was not really the case. Revolutionary ideas and the Napoleonic conquests had swept away many antiquated relics of feudalism and thus prepared the way for the growth of democracy in the nineteenth century. Warfare and revolt against French domination had also stimulated the feeling of nationality. Democratic ideas, national fervour, and the vast material progress rendered possible by the Industrial Revolution—these form the theme of European history in the century following Napoleon's downfall and make the revolutionary period a veritable seed-time of the modern world.



## CHAPTER V

### THE YOUNGER PITT AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTIONARY WAR

#### **The Fox-North Coalition**

THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES (1783), which concluded the American War, had been the work of Shelburne. He was a clever man, but distrusted by friend and foe. Fox, Burke, and others had resigned when he became Prime Minister, and it was Fox who soon brought about his overthrow. Opposition to the Treaty of Versailles had united Fox and North. They outvoted Shelburne and then formed a coalition.

The Fox-North coalition (1783) astonished the King and the nation. Charles James Fox had begun his career as a supporter of the King's personal government, but for the last ten years he had been its bitterest opponent. He had opposed the policy leading to the American War, he had denounced Lord North's subservience to his royal master, and he had championed the Americans' cause so much as to adopt their colours and wear a buff-and-blue coat. He was by now the recognized leader of the extreme Whigs, who stood for all that George III hated, and hated all that George III stood for. Fox was a brilliant and witty debater, a warm-hearted friend and generous foe, and a champion of the oppressed. He had been behind the granting of Irish Parliamentary independence in 1782; when the French Revolution broke out he hailed it as the overthrow of tyranny; he advocated Parliamentary reform and opposed the government's curtailment of English liberties after war was declared against France in 1793; his last political act before his death in 1806 was to secure the abolition of the British slave-trade. Most of his life was spent in opposition, first to Lord North and then to the Younger Pitt. He was a hard drinker and a reckless gambler, but despite his practice at the gaming table he played his political cards like a novice on the only occasion when he set



out deliberately to win the stakes of high office. This was his amazing attempt to form a government with Lord North. The nation was scandalized at an arrangement between two such opposites. "England does not love coalitions," it has been said; however necessary they may be in times of crisis, there was no such excuse in 1783. George III was furious that his ex-friend North should join forces with his bitterest enemy, Fox. He soon compassed the downfall of the new government. Fox introduced an India Bill which placed important (and lucrative) appointments in India under the control of commissioners appointed by the government. Reform of our Indian government was overdue, but Fox's enemies objected that the proposed bill would increase the government's patronage and encourage corruption. The bill passed the Commons, but when it came before the Lords the King secured its rejection by unconstitutionally sending a message through Lord Temple that anyone voting for the bill was "not only not his friend, but would be considered by him as his enemy." Fox and North were out-trumped and threw in their cards; the King selected William Pitt to deal the next hand.

### **A 'Mince-pie' that lasted Eighteen Years**

William Pitt the Younger (1759-1806) was the second son of the Earl of Chatham. Born in the famous Year of Victories, he was only twenty-four when he was chosen to be Prime Minister (December, 1783). He had been Chancellor of the Exchequer under Shelburne, but compared with experienced politicians like Fox, Burke, and North he was a mere 'schoolboy.' He was also in a minority in the Commons and his enemies jestingly called his ministry a 'mince-pie administration' which would last only over the Christmas holidays. But Pitt bravely held on his course, matched the Whigs in debate, and early in 1784 dissolved Parliament. The resulting general election gave him a substantial majority. Pitt's 'mince-pie administration' had received a new lease of life, and in the event was prolonged for eighteen years (1783-1801). Pitt rallied around him all those who were dissatisfied with the old Whig factions and in time



built up a new Tory party, less subservient to the King than North and his 'King's friends.'

### **Pitt as Prime Minister**

Pitt's ministry was sharply divided by the outbreak of war in 1793. For ten years (1783-1793) Pitt concentrated on reform at home and in the empire. After 1793 he was occupied with the war, and his domestic policy became reactionary.

In some ways the Younger Pitt may be regarded even more than Walpole as our first Prime Minister. Not only did he, like his predecessor, keep a close control over his own ministers, but he was much less dependent upon the Court than Walpole had been. Under the capable Pitt George III's personal influence declined, although, as the question of Catholic Emancipation was later to show, it could assert itself when the King was sufficiently aroused. The King's declining mental powers, which ended by sending him insane, worked in the same direction. Like his father, Pitt was personally honest; but in that age he could not altogether escape from the atmosphere of corruption. He had to work with self-seeking politicians, he often yielded to the opposition of vested interests, and he rewarded many of his supporters with peerages. In their capabilities, however, father and son were very dissimilar. Chatham was a great war minister who dominated Parliament with his superb eloquence and fired the nation with his own enthusiasm. His son was of a colder and more logical turn of mind and excelled as a peace minister.

### **Domestic Reforms (1783-1793)**

Pitt was his own Chancellor of the Exchequer and his financial work owes much, not only to his own love of order and economy, but also to the teachings of Adam Smith, the author of *The Wealth of Nations*. Adam Smith proclaimed the obvious but often overlooked truth that gold and silver are of little value if they are not used to promote the exchange of commodities. He emphasized the fact that trade is of *mutual* benefit and that the prosperity of one country does not necessarily spell the ruin



of another. The more each country concentrates upon what it can best produce, and the more all countries trade with one another, the more prosperous will each and all become. Along these lines was formulated the doctrine of free trade, *i.e.*, the removal of all duties and other devices intended to interfere with the exchange of commodities. Walpole had moved slightly in the direction of free trade; but Pitt was unquestionably our first free-trade minister, the first of a line of notable names including Huskisson, Peel, and Gladstone.

As a result of the American War the national finances were in a bad way. There was an annual deficit of revenue over expenditure and the National Debt had increased from about £130,000,000 to £250,000,000. Walpole's Sinking Fund had lapsed into disuse, so Pitt began a new one. Every year the government was to pay a million pounds to certain Debt Commissioners. With this money the Commissioners would buy up some of the National Debt (*i.e.*, the various bonds that represented money lent to the government) and would receive the interest, in place of the original bondholders. Thus every year the Commissioners would receive a fresh million pounds plus the interest, mounting at compound rates, on bonds purchased by their previous millions. Pitt calculated that after twenty-eight years the National Debt would disappear—but, alas, the Revolutionary and other wars have intervened to frustrate Pitt's dreams.

Important savings were also effected by raising loans by tender, *i.e.*, inviting offers from financiers and selecting the most economical; this was preferable to the old and often dishonest practice of ministers' arranging government loans from their friends. Pitt also introduced the audit of government accounts whereby disinterested experts checked the various items of receipt and expenditure in the nation's balance sheet. Hitherto many taxes had been earmarked for particular items of expenditure; a new expense meant a new tax and it was not always easy to transfer a surplus from one tax to make up a deficit on another. Pitt abolished this foolish practice by establishing one large Consolidated Fund at the Bank of Eng-



land, into which all taxes were paid and out of which all expenses were met.

In his commercial policy Pitt showed clearly the influence of Adam Smith. Pitt passed an Excise Bill similar to that abandoned by Walpole fifty years before; this meant the establishment of bonded warehouses, a payment of taxes only when goods were consumed in this country, and a reduction in smuggling. Many taxes were also simplified. Goods often paid taxes at more than one stage in their importation or their manufacture; thus a pound of nutmegs paid nine separate duties. Pitt arranged, wherever possible, for only one tax to be paid; this was less confusing for everyone concerned. At the same time he reduced many taxes; tea, which had paid 119 per cent., now paid only 12 per cent. Simplification and reduction, by discouraging smuggling and encouraging consumption, led eventually to an increase in the total revenue obtained; but to make good the initial loss Pitt placed fresh taxes on luxury articles such as hair-powder and carriages. His window-tax was less sensible and led to much unhealthy brick-ing up of windows. In 1786 he concluded, through his friend William Eden, the 'Eden' Free Trade Treaty with France whereby only small duties were levied on British manufactures entering France, and Britain received French wines and silks on similar terms. Unfortunately the French Revolution and the war soon intervened to render this treaty inoperative.

Certain reforms projected by Pitt had to be abandoned owing to the opposition of vested interests. A Free Trade Treaty with Ireland was opposed in both countries, but particularly in England whose manufacturers feared the competition of cheap Irish labour; Anglo-Irish free trade had to wait till the Act of Union, 1800. Under the influence of Wilberforce, Pitt tried to abolish the iniquitous slave-trade, but here again vested interests were too strong. It was the same when he proposed to abolish thirty-six of the more flagrant rotten boroughs and transfer their seventy-two seats to more populous industrial districts.



**Imperial and Foreign Affairs (1783-1793)**

Reform of our government in India and Canada was sorely needed, and it was necessary to restore British influence abroad after the disasters of the American War. Pitt tackled all these questions with success.

In 1784 he passed an India Act. The East India Company was henceforth to confine its activities to matters of trade, though it was allowed, under government supervision, to make appointments to all but the highest posts in India. Matters of high politics and diplomacy were reserved to the British government, working through a Board of Control which met in London and foreshadowed the later India Office. The Governor-General and the subordinate Governors of the British provinces (still only a very small part of India) were appointed by the government, and a defect of Lord North's Regulating Act was remedied by strengthening the position of the Governor-General in relation to his council. This system of dual control by the government and the Company worked well, considering the circumstances, for the next seventy years and was only ended when the Company was abolished in 1858 after the Indian Mutiny.

Indian affairs attracted much attention during these years owing to the trial of Warren Hastings, the Governor-General under North's Act. Hastings had been much hampered by his council, one of whose members, Sir Philip Francis, returned home and spread tales of Hastings' tyranny and extortions. The Whigs readily gave ear and when they demanded a trial Pitt gave a grudging assent. For seven years (1788-1795), though with many long intervals, Hastings was impeached before the House of Lords sitting in Westminster Hall. Burke led the attack and in matchless eloquence likened Hastings' oppressions to those of "a judge in hell." Hastings had undoubtedly acted wrongly according to western standards, but Burke had no personal knowledge of India and of the difficulties of applying such standards to the conditions of the east. The trial ended with Hastings' acquittal, but it had emphasized



native rights and served as a useful warning to later administrators (see Chapter XIX).

Problems arose in Canada after the American War when many thousands of United Empire Loyalists emigrated from the United States to the district north of the Great Lakes. The French Canadians in Quebec had been allowed to retain their own language, laws, and religion, but they had practically no rights of self-government. They were now joined by settlers of a different nationality who were used to, and expected, a large measure of self-government. Pitt's Canada Act (1791) solved the problem along sensible lines. Canada was divided into two provinces by the River Ottawa, a tributary of the St Lawrence. Upper Canada or Ontario (so-called because it was in the *upper* reaches of the St Lawrence) was mainly British, Lower Canada or Quebec mainly French. Each province was allowed to elect its own Legislative Assembly to pass laws and decide taxation; but the governor and his council, who executed laws and carried on the day-to-day government, were appointed by Britain. This separation of the two races and the grant of what is called *representative* government worked well for nearly half a century till Lord Durham's Report (1839) advocated the reunion of the two provinces and a larger measure of self-government (see Chapter XVIII).

Pitt's foreign policy was based on the necessity of restoring British prestige and, as far as possible, of maintaining peace to allow the country to recuperate. In 1789-1790 Pitt asserted, as against Spain (whose colonists had crept up the American coast from California), the rights of British colonists to settle in Nootka Sound (Vancouver Island) and in British Columbia. He opposed the extension of Russian power along the shores of the Black Sea, and, although unsuccessful in checking Catherine the Great's designs, he deserves credit for being the first British statesman to realize the threat to British interests involved by this Russian expansion. In 1788 he formed a Triple Alliance with Holland and Prussia, which ended Britain's isolation after the American War. His hopes of a long period of peace were shattered by the French Revolution.



## British Opinion and the French Revolution

Events across the Channel were at first generally welcomed in England where it was felt that the French were getting rid of their shackles and working out a form of government more like our own. Fox, on hearing of the fall of the Bastille, exclaimed, "How much the greatest event that has happened in the world, and how much the best!" A group of young poets, headed by Wordsworth, hailed the revolution as the dawn of a new world. The Radicals, or extreme reformers, realized also that events in France would be bound to affect Britain, and they looked forward to a more favourable atmosphere for their own agitations for Parliamentary reform. In their view the Glorious Revolution of 1689 had shed much of its glory after exactly a century, and it was high time that the people acquired further liberties. This point of view was expressed in Parliament by Fox and many Whigs, and outside Parliament by Tom Paine (who had helped the Americans to achieve their independence), by the Nonconformist Dr Priestley (the discoverer of oxygen), and by Thomas Hardy (who founded the London Corresponding Society to keep in touch with similar reformist societies elsewhere).

The King and the governing classes strongly opposed this view of the French Revolution. Their opposition was strengthened by the publication (November, 1790) of Edmund Burke's greatest work, his *Reflections on the French Revolution*. Burke, the former champion of American liberties against George III's personal government and of Indian native rights against the irregularities of Warren Hastings, adopted an attitude of uncompromising opposition to the French Revolution. It was the work, he alleged, of novices whose break with the past would merely destroy the good work of centuries and erect nothing in its place. He prophesied bloodier violence and the eventual emergence of a military dictatorship, and rejected all comparisons between 1689 and 1789. Thirty thousand copies were sold in six years and the book exerted enormous influence. It was answered in 1791 by Tom Paine in the first part of *The Rights of Man* which pointed out that Burke's concern for the trappings



of the old monarchy and aristocracy made him blind to the social miseries of the French peasants. "Burke pitied the plumage, but forgot the dying bird." This was sound criticism, but when Paine produced a second part to his book advocating the abolition of the British monarchy and of the House of Lords, he had to escape to France, where the revolutionaries imprisoned and all but guillotined their English champion!

Controversy produced a split in the Whig party. Burke led many Whigs over to the support of Pitt, where they merged with the Tories. Fox and a young Whig, Charles Grey (Prime Minister when the First Reform Act was passed in 1832), continued to press for reform and oppose the growing reaction of Pitt's government. Pitt himself had expressed cautious approval of the early actions of the revolutionaries; but he soon halted and assumed the rôle of an anxious spectator desirous above all for peace. In 1792 he reduced the army and navy votes and looked forward to fifteen years of peace.

### **Why Britain and France went to War**

As the French Revolution became more and more extreme it alienated opinion abroad. In the autumn of 1792 the September massacres, organized by bands of ruffians in Paris, shocked the rest of Europe, and Englishmen recalled the prophecies of Burke's *Reflections*. In January, 1793, Louis XVI was guillotined. Moreover, when the revolutionaries issued decrees in November, 1792, promising aid to all nations that attempted to overthrow their rulers, this appeared an unwarrantable interference in the internal affairs of other countries.

In 1792 France overran the Austrian Netherlands (present-day Belgium) and obtained control of the coast-line, so vital to British security, across the Straits of Dover. Furthermore, the French declared the River Scheldt open to international commerce. The Scheldt had been closed by various treaties, including the Treaty of Utrecht, and its estuary had been placed under the control of Holland. This had been done for selfish reasons—to prevent the great Scheldt port of Antwerp from competing with the trade of London and Amsterdam.



But Britain and Holland were able to adopt a lofty tone and accuse France of breaking international treaties, so in February, 1793, France declared war on Britain and Holland. The alliance of Britain and Holland ceased in 1795 when Holland, Prussia, and Spain withdrew from the First Coalition and Holland signed a treaty of alliance with France.

### **Pitt's Reactionary Policy after 1793**

With the outbreak of war the rulers of Britain lost all sense of proportion; they suspected Jacobins or extreme revolutionaries round every street-corner, and regarded demands for reform, however reasonable, as steps towards the abyss of revolution. Pitt, who had been progressive before 1793, though never very interested in social reforms, led the country in this policy of reaction. The Foxite Whigs protested, but their numbers had shrunk too much for them to achieve anything.

In 1793 some Scottish radical leaders were sentenced to transportation for demanding Parliamentary reform. In the following year Thomas Hardy of the London Corresponding Society was tried for high treason, but was acquitted by the jury. Thereupon (1794) the government suspended the Habeas Corpus Act, thus making it possible for people to be imprisoned without trial; it remained suspended throughout the rest of Pitt's ministry. In 1795 Pitt passed two 'Gagging Acts,' as his opponents nicknamed them. The Treasonable Practices Act made it treasonable to speak or write against the government; the Seditious Meetings Act prohibited public meetings without official licence. In 1799 and 1800 Anti-Combination Acts declared it to be illegal for workmen to discuss together methods of improving their miserable working-conditions; thus trade unions were forbidden, and spies and even *agents provocateurs* were sent among the working-classes to act as informers.

In times of crisis the first duty of the government is to maintain public order; but Pitt undoubtedly exaggerated the danger of revolution and set an example of reaction which the governing classes and the Tories were only too glad to follow.



## War Finance

Pitt made the common mistake of assuming that the war would be a short one, and at first resorted to loans to raise the necessary money. He even borrowed money to keep his Sinking Fund going, although the Sinking Fund was itself a device for reducing the amount of money borrowed! He probably saw the absurdity of this, but was unwilling to let the Sinking Fund lapse.

In 1797, the critical year when Britain was left alone against France and an invasion was feared, the public swarmed to the Bank of England to change their notes into gold. To save the nation's gold, Pitt suspended cash payments from the Bank. After a time inflation occurred—*i.e.*, the notes were issued to excess and, as a consequence, prices rose, causing much hardship among the working-classes.

As the war continued and Britain assumed more and more the rôle of paymaster of her continental allies, Pitt had to resort to methods more heroic than mere borrowing. New taxes were levied, the most painfully familiar, albeit the fairest, being the income-tax introduced in 1798. The rates ranged from 2*d.* in the pound on incomes of £60 to 2*s.* in the pound on incomes over £200. It was a war-time measure only and was repealed in 1816. Borrowing continued to be necessary to supplement taxation, and the National Debt, which had been about £244,000,000 in 1793 had reached nearly £900,000,000 in 1815.

## Opening Years of the War

Pitt was inferior to his father as a war minister. He underestimated the strength of France and seemed to lack definite strategical plans. He suffered from his own neglect of the army, and the leaders he chose, such as the Duke of York, were often incompetent. Moreover, he failed to use the navy to blockade the enemy ports and coastline close in. None the less he persevered and was undaunted by setbacks, and in fairness it must be remembered that his quarrelsome allies compare very unfavourably with Frederick the Great in his father's day.



In 1793 the Duke of York, the King's second son, was sent to command a mixed army in Flanders. He wasted time in fruitless enterprises and achieved nothing except to show, in Wellington's words, "how not to do it." His methods have been summed up in the famous rhyme:

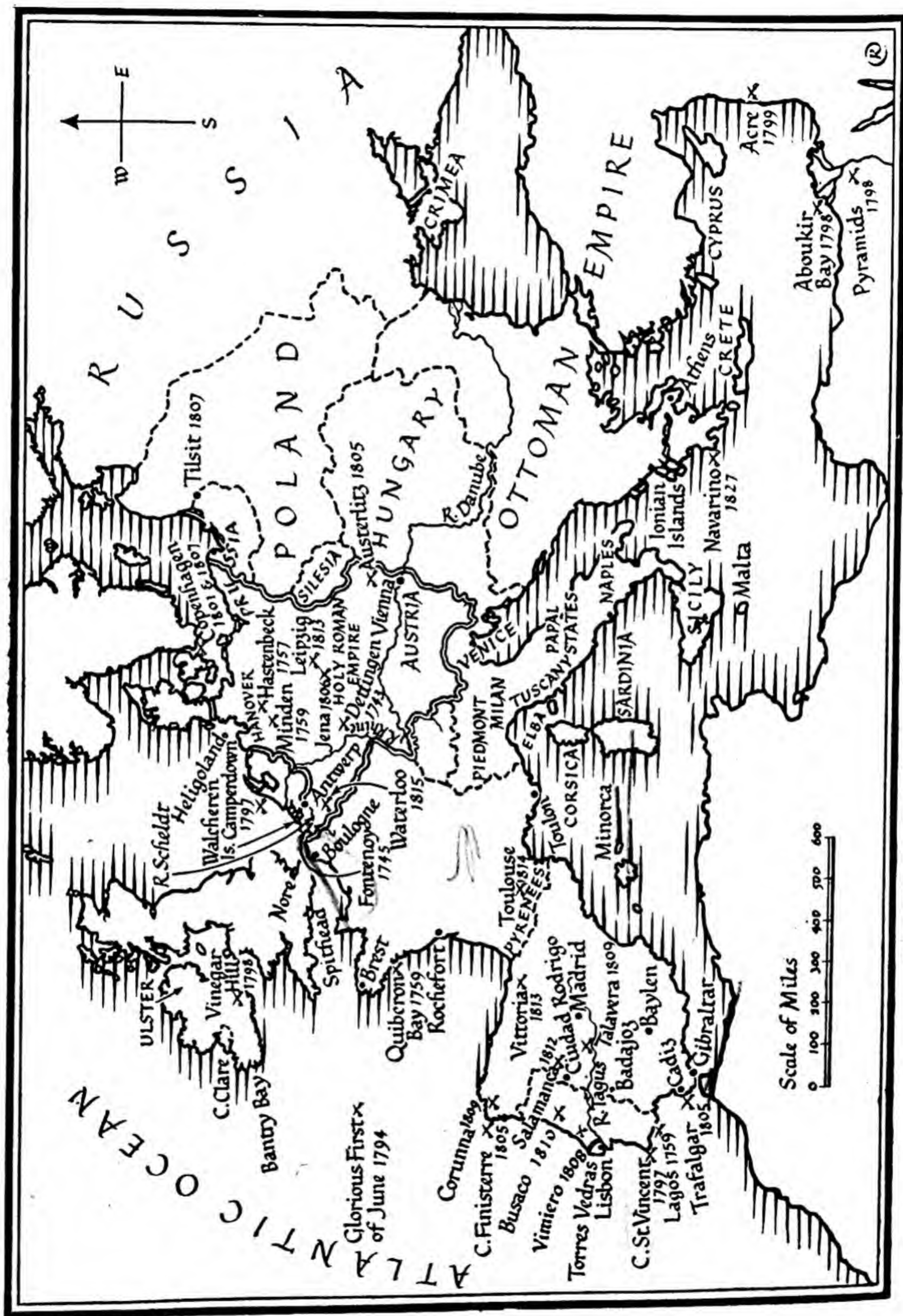
The brave old Duke of York,  
He had ten thousand men,  
He marched them up to the top of a hill  
And marched them down again.

In the same year the British fleet brought help to a royalist rising at Toulon; but its efforts were soon frustrated by a young artillery officer, Napoleon Bonaparte. A similar attempt to help the royalists at Quiberon in Brittany also failed. Thereafter British troops practically disappeared from the Continent for over ten years, and the war was carried on by the navy. Apart from engaging the enemy, the navy's work was fourfold. It protected Britain and her sea-routes from attack; it blockaded France and her allies; it co-operated with the army to seize enemy colonies; and when the time arrived for continental expeditions it conveyed troops and provisions and was always ready to evacuate them if necessary. During these early years the British captured the French West Indies; but disease exacted a heavy toll from the British troops and Pitt has been much criticized for this expensive expedition. On June 1, 1794, the first important naval battle of the war occurred. French ships bringing grain from America were met by French warships which left Brest for the purpose. Lord Howe defeated the French fleet about 400 miles out in the Atlantic. This was the 'Glorious First of June,' but its glory was tarnished both by the fact that the corn ships got through and by the reflection that sounder blockading would have prevented the French warships from sailing.

### 1797—A Critical Year

1797 was a very critical year for Britain. One by one her allies had been knocked out. This placed at her mercy the Dutch colonies of Ceylon, Cape of Good Hope, and Java, and





EUROPE AND THE MEDITERRANEAN IN BRITISH HISTORY



the Spanish colony of Trinidad; but the addition of the Dutch and Spanish fleets to the French made an invasion of England a real danger. In 1797 Britain's last remaining ally, Austria, was forced to make peace. The British navy was for a short time paralysed by mutiny. The French were still planning to invade Ireland—as they had done in 1796 when an expedition under Hoche reached Bantry Bay and was driven off only by unfavourable weather. This, too, was the year of the run on the Bank of England and Pitt's suspension of cash payments.

In February, 1797, Admiral Jervis intercepted the Spanish fleet, sailing north to join the French, off Cape St Vincent at the southern tip of Portugal. He inflicted a severe defeat on the enemy by breaking their line of battle. His second-in-command, Horatio Nelson, disobeyed orders (for not the only time in his career) by leaving formation, attacking the enemy ships singly, and thus preventing their escape.

There still remained the French fleet at Brest and the Dutch fleet in the Texel, and, to add to the anxieties of the government, mutinies broke out among the sailors detailed to watch these fleets. The first mutiny, at Spithead, was against genuine grievances, of which there were plenty in those days of press-gangs, bad food, barbarous punishments, and low pay. The government adopted a conciliatory attitude and the affair blew over. The other mutiny, among Admiral Duncan's fleet watching the Dutch, was more serious. The sailors took their ships back to the Nore, uttered wild and revolutionary threats against the government, and declared a blockade of London. Stern measures were taken to quell the mutiny, Parker and other ringleaders being hanged. During this anxious period Admiral Duncan deceived the Dutch by sending signals to an imaginary fleet just beyond the horizon.

In October, 1797, Duncan's spirited sailors were given a chance to redeem their reputation. They engaged the Dutch fleet at Camperdown and captured half the enemy ships. Britain was secured from immediate invasion.



### **Napoleon's Egyptian Expedition (1798-1799)**

In 1798 Nelson was given his first independent command—to watch Toulon where a French expeditionary force was being assembled.

Horatio Nelson (1758-1805) was the son of a Norfolk clergyman. He went to sea at the age of twelve and saw action during the American War, but his frail health (he was always sea-sick for the first few days at sea) interfered with his career, and when war broke out in 1793 he was comfortably settled in Norfolk. He was soon at sea again in command of a ship, and in 1794 lost an eye while leading a landing-party upon Corsica. Three years later he distinguished himself at Cape St Vincent, and in the same year lost his right arm attacking the Spanish treasure-fleet in the Canaries. On being given a pension he jokingly remarked that he would soon be back again minus a leg.

Early in 1798 Napoleon and his army managed to escape from Toulon. Their destination was Egypt, where Napoleon hoped not only to make a name for himself in the glamorous east, but also to threaten British Mediterranean interests, and to establish contact with anti-British interests in India. Nelson guessed Napoleon's destination and actually reached Egypt before him, for the French had stopped on the way to capture Malta from the old crusading order of the Knights of St John. Thinking he had guessed wrong, Nelson sailed elsewhere and Napoleon landed unmolested in Egypt. At the Battle of the Pyramids he defeated the Mamelukes, a military caste who ruled Egypt on behalf of the nominal sovereign power, Turkey. But Napoleon's plans were soon upset by the destruction of his fleet. For Nelson had returned and found the French ships anchored in Aboukir Bay near the mouth of the Nile. They were not laid close enough to the shore, however, and in the evening of August 1, 1798, they were subjected to a withering fire from all sides, as part of the British fleet wormed its way between the enemy and the coast. Only two out of thirteen French warships survived. At 10 P.M. the French flagship *L'Orient* blew up; on board were the captain, Casabianca,



and his young son—the boy who “stood on the burning deck.”

The Battle of the Nile cut off Napoleon's retreat, and he decided to march northward through Syria and re-enter Europe *via* Turkey. But at Acre he was held up by Turkish soldiers, ably helped by a British naval squadron under Sir Sidney Smith, one of Nelson's captains (1799). Napoleon returned to Egypt and was lucky to escape, with a few chosen officers, back to France, where he made himself First Consul and prepared plans for the overthrow of the Second Coalition formed against France during his absence.

In the next two years Napoleon's work in the eastern Mediterranean was undone. In 1800 Britain captured Malta, and in 1801 a British army under Sir Ralph Abercromby destroyed the French force left behind in Egypt. When “the tumult and the shouting” died, one permanent gain to European learning emerged—the digging up by French soldiers of the Rosetta Stone which enabled scholars to decipher the hieroglyphics of ancient Egypt.

### **Marengo (1800) and the Baltic (1801)**

The Second Coalition, subsidized like the First by Britain, included Austria and Russia as its principal members. In 1800 Napoleon crossed the Great St Bernard Pass into north Italy and crushed the Austrian army at Marengo; later in the year Austria was again defeated by one of Napoleon's marshals at Hohenlinden. By 1801 Austria had made peace, and Britain once more faced Napoleon alone.

In 1800 the Baltic powers, urged on by Napoleon and led by Russia and Denmark, had revived the Armed Neutrality of 1780 to safeguard the so-called freedom of the seas. This vexed question has frequently produced friction between Britain and neutral countries, for, while it is generally agreed that neutral ships carrying contraband of war to belligerent countries are lawful prizes, neutrals have often objected to the British claim to right of search, and furthermore the term ‘contraband’ can be stretched to include almost anything. The Danish fleet was the



chief weapon of the League, and although Britain and Denmark were nominally at peace, a British fleet was sent to Copenhagen. It was commanded by Sir Hyde Parker, but the action was undertaken by his second-in-command, Nelson, who, against his superior's orders, risked the shallow waters and the shore batteries to engage the enemy (April, 1801).

Nelson walked the deck considerably agitated, which was always known by his moving the stump of his right arm. After a turn or two he said in a quick manner: "Do you know what's shown on board the Commander-in-Chief?" . . . "Why, to leave off action!" "Leave off action!" he repeated, and then added with a shrug, "Now damn me if I do!" He then observed to Captain Foley, "You know, Foley, I have only one eye—I have a right to be blind sometimes." And then with an archness peculiar to his character, putting the glass to his blind eye, he exclaimed: "I really do not see the signal." (Southey's *Life of Nelson*.)

After four hours' bombardment the Danes surrendered.

### **The Peace of Amiens (1802)**

In 1801 Pitt resigned over the question of Catholic Emancipation (see Chapter VII). He was succeeded by Addington, who remained in office for the next three years. Pitt had begun and Addington completed the negotiations for peace.

By the Peace of Amiens Britain retained Dutch Ceylon and Spanish Trinidad, but she agreed to give back her other conquests, including the French West Indies, to France, and Malta to the Knights of St John. France retained Belgium and the Rhine frontier, but it was understood that she would withdraw her armies from Holland, Switzerland, and Italy, though nothing definite was promised. "It was a peace of which everyone was glad and nobody proud," remarked a contemporary.

### **QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES**

1. Give an account of Pitt's domestic and imperial reforms (1783-1793).



2. Criticize the following: (a) Pitt's reactionary policy after 1793, (b) Pitt's war finance, (c) Pitt's conduct of the war.
3. What part was played by Britain in the French Revolutionary War (1793-1802)?
4. Write notes on: Edmund Burke, Charles James Fox, Adam Smith, Tom Paine.
5. Consider in class whether Napoleon might not have been lured to his own destruction if he had not been checked at the battles of the Nile and of Acre.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE NAPOLEONIC WARS

#### War Again, 1803

NAPOLEON's restless ambitions were not satisfied by the Peace of Amiens. Instead of withdrawing his troops he strengthened his hold upon Holland, western Germany, Switzerland, and north Italy. He even intrigued in distant places like the West Indies and India. A French colonel's report that 6,000 troops would suffice to conquer Egypt was openly published in the French press. In these circumstances Britain refused to surrender Malta, and the British press caricatured "Boney the Corsican Ogre." By May, 1803, after just over a year's truce, Britain and France were at war again.

#### Napoleon's Invasion Scheme (1803-1805) and Trafalgar (1805)

Napoleon had long realized that Britain's commercial wealth and sea-power stood between him and the domination of the



NAPOLEON'S INVASION MEDAL

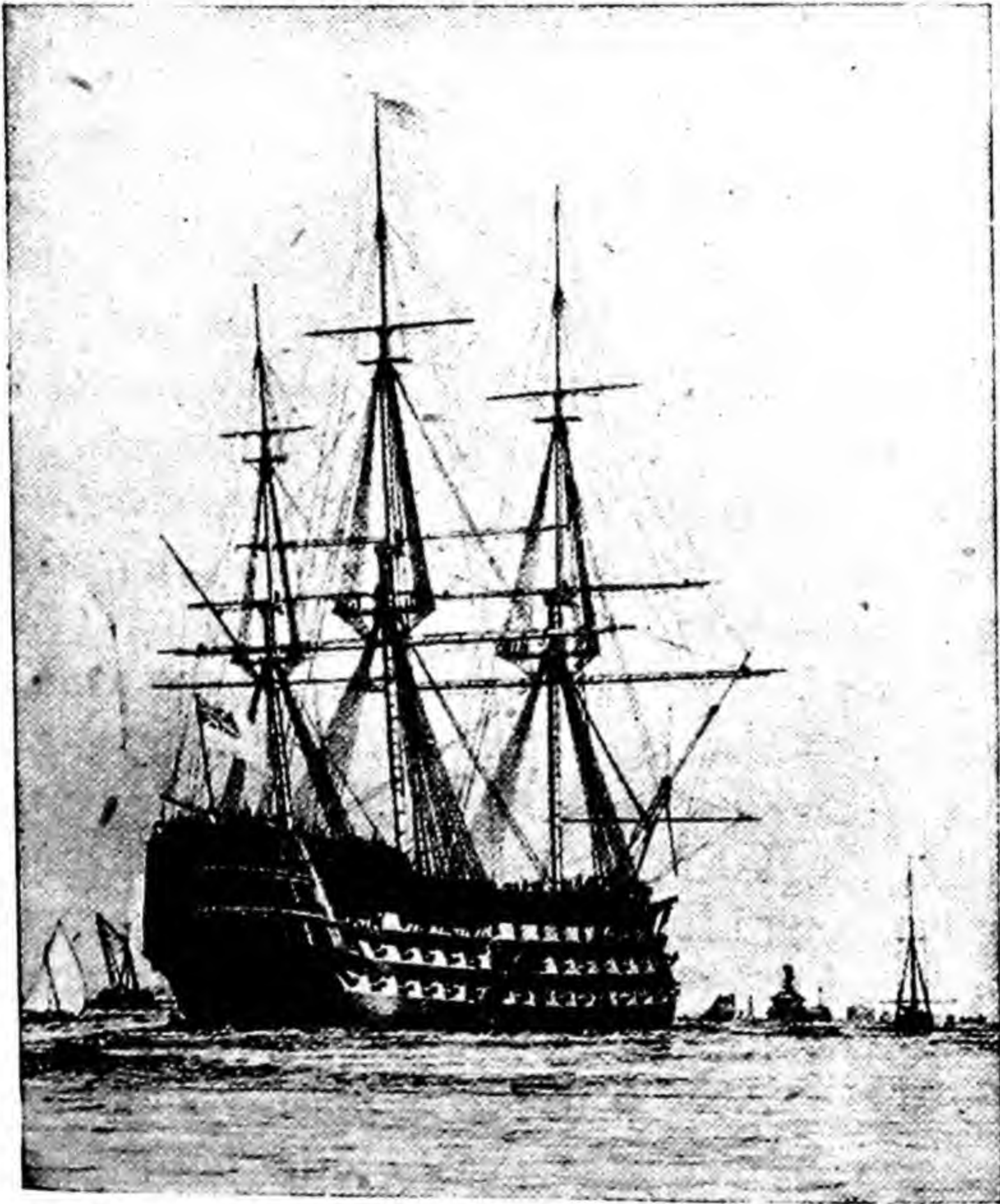
A medal prepared by Napoleon to be issued at London in honour of his expected triumph. It represents Hercules overthrowing a merman, and bears the legend *Frappée à Londres*—'Struck in London'—1804.

After a cast in the British Museum

world, and for the next two years he devoted himself to plans for invading England. He collected an army of about 100,000 at Boulogne and constructed 2,000 flat-bottomed boats, propelled by oars, for transport. In England volunteers were



enrolled and hurriedly trained to assist the small regular army, and round Martello towers (whose ruins can still be seen) were built along the south and south-east coasts. If Napoleon had been able to transport his well-trained army he would almost certainly have conquered England, but as Lord St Vincent (formerly Admiral Jervis, victor of the battle of Cape St



THE VICTORY

Vincent) said: "I won't say the French can't come; I only know they can't come by water." Napoleon soon realized that naval superiority in the Channel, if only for a short time, was essential for his plans. But his fleets were bottled up. Nelson, who did not set foot on shore for almost two years, watched Villeneuve's fleet at Toulon; Cornwallis, the brother of the soldier of Yorktown, blockaded Brest. In 1804 the Spanish fleet became the ally of the French—if only it too could get out!

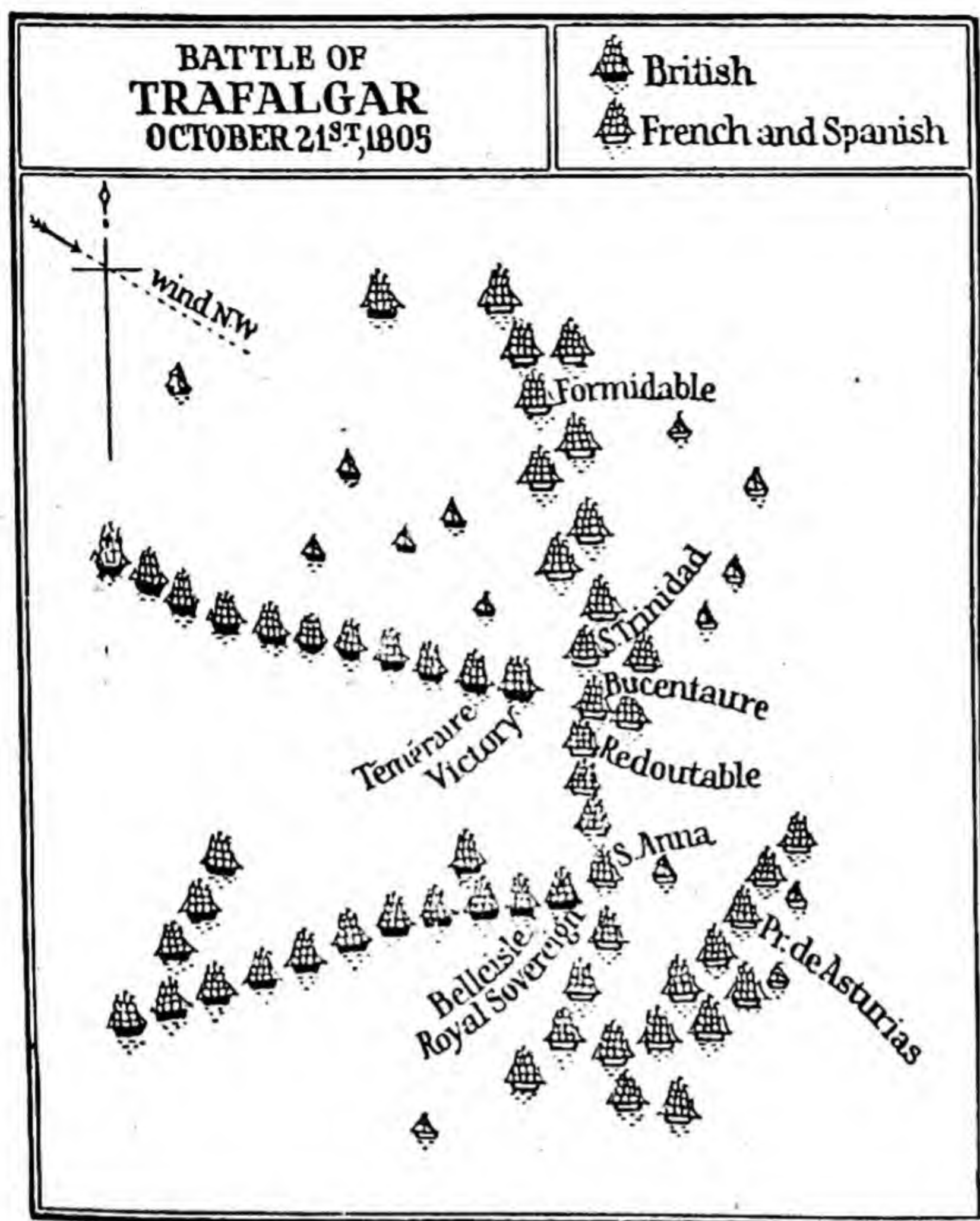


In 1805 Napoleon made his grand bid. As many fleets as could were to elude the British watchers (and this was always possible with perhaps mist to enshroud activities or storm to drive the blockading warships away); they were to sail to the West Indies and lure the British squadrons from home waters by ravaging British possessions; a quick return to Europe might then give them sufficient command of the Channel to convoy the troops across.

In April Villeneuve escaped from Toulon and made for Gibraltar, where he was joined by some Spanish ships from Cadiz. Nelson at first thought Villeneuve's destination was Egypt, but as soon as he discovered his mistake he followed the French across the Atlantic. He missed his prey in the West Indies owing to misinformation, but, on learning that Villeneuve was returning to European waters, he sent home a fast brig to warn the Admiralty. A fleet was assembled under Admiral Calder to intercept Villeneuve and an indecisive action was fought in a fog off Cape Finisterre (July, 1805). Cornwallis meanwhile was still blockading the French ships at Brest, and Villeneuve, avoiding any further engagement, retired south to Cadiz. Napoleon realized that his scheme had failed, and in August and September he struck camp at Boulogne and marched his 'army of England' into central Europe where the Third Coalition had been formed against him.

On his return to England Nelson was given the task of dealing with Villeneuve's fleet at Cadiz, and in September he left Portsmouth amid scenes of great enthusiasm. The French admiral, stung by Napoleon's taunts of cowardice, put to sea, and the two fleets engaged in battle off Cape Trafalgar (October 21, 1805). Nelson commanded twenty-seven ships as against Villeneuve's thirty-three. He split his fleet into two columns, one led by himself in the *Victory*, the other by Collingwood in the *Royal Sovereign*. Pursuing tactics long perfected by the navy, he broke the enemy's line and dealt with the fragments in detail. Nelson himself was hit in the left shoulder and as he lay dying could hear the shouts of triumph as one by one the French struck their flags. Fourteen or fifteen at least had surrendered,





he was told by Captain Hardy. "That is well," said Nelson, "but I bargained for twenty." By the end of the day it was twenty sunk or captured and the British victory was complete.

Trafalgar settled the issue at sea. Although the war continued for another ten years, there was no further major engagement. Napoleon resorted to indirect means of crippling British commerce, and the navy still had plenty to do in blockading enemy coasts and supporting expeditions.

### **Pitt's Second Ministry (1804-1806)**

Amid the fear of invasion Pitt had been recalled to power. He organized the Third Coalition, the principal members of which were Austria and Russia, against whom Napoleon led his army when he left Boulogne in the late summer of 1805. On



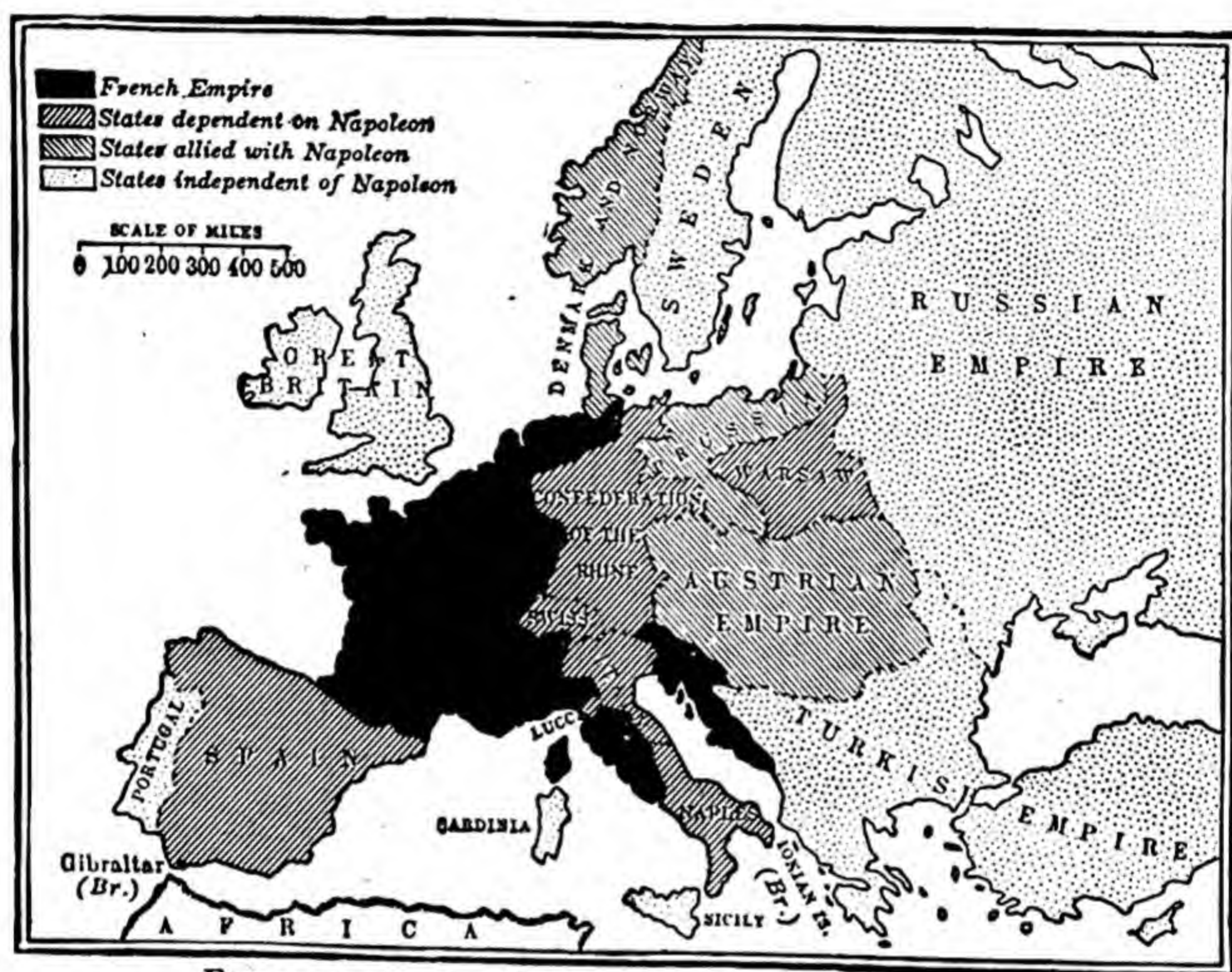
the day before Trafalgar the Austrians were defeated at Ulm, but the news of Trafalgar outshone everything else, and at the Guildhall banquet in November Pitt uttered the memorable words, "England has saved herself by her exertions; she will, I trust, save Europe by her example." On December 2, 1805, Napoleon won perhaps the greatest of all his victories over the Austrians and Russians at Austerlitz. The news of this shattered Pitt's failing health. "Roll up that map of Europe; it will not be wanted these ten years," he is supposed to have said. On January 23, 1806, the great statesman died at the early age of forty-six. He lacked his father's brilliance as a war minister, but his steadfastness and courage had piloted Britain through some of the most critical years in her history, and the French recognized in him their biggest obstacle to success.

### **Domestic Affairs after Pitt**

Pitt's death was followed by a coalition government of Whigs and Tories known as the 'Ministry of All the Talents.' Its leader was Grenville, son of the minister who had passed the Stamp Act, but its outstanding member was Pitt's rival, Fox. For years Fox had been urging Pitt to enter into peace negotiations; but now he was in office he soon realized the futility of peace negotiations with Napoleon, who at the height of his power was loath to relinquish his mastery over Europe. Fox died in September, 1806, crowning his life's work with an act worthy of his generous and compassionate nature, the abolition of the slave-trade. The act was passed in 1807, but its preparation was the work of Fox. The horrors of the slave-trade, and especially of the 'middle passage' between Africa and America, had long been attacked in many quarters. Methodists and Quakers had denounced the trade, but it was the Evangelicals who deserved most credit for securing its abolition. The leader of the anti-slavery movement was Pitt's friend, William Wilberforce, who with Clarkson, Zachary Macaulay (father of the historian), and others constituted the 'Clapham Sect,' so-called after the London suburb where they lived and worshipped. British merchants, particularly of Bristol and Liverpool, waxed



prosperous over the trade, but the exposures of Wilberforce and others in time stung the nation into action, and after 1807 it became illegal for British subjects to engage in the slave-trade. Wilberforce now turned his attention to the task of freeing the existing slaves and their descendants. This battle was not won till 1833.



## EUROPE AT THE HEIGHT OF NAPOLEON'S POWER

In 1807 the coalition ministry resigned owing to disagreement between the King and the Whigs over Catholic Emancipation. The Tories then resumed office. Portland was Prime Minister from 1807 to 1809; his ministry was ended by a duel between his two most capable ministers, Lord Castlereagh and George Canning. Then followed a ministry under Spencer Perceval (1809-1812), and finally Lord Liverpool's ministry (1812-1827) which outlasted the war. Liverpool's ministry was dominated by Castlereagh who was Foreign Secretary till his death in 1822.

## The End of the Third Coalition

After Pitt's death the Third Coalition soon came to an end.



Prussia, which Napoleon had kept quiet by the bribe of Hanover, awoke too late to its danger. It declared war on France but was crushed at Jena (1806) and Napoleon entered Berlin. In 1807 Russia was defeated at Friedland, and the Tsar Alexander I was glad to make peace with the conqueror of Europe at Tilsit. The Treaty of Tilsit dismembered Prussia and divided Europe between Russia and France, but in Napoleon's view Russia was the junior partner, expected to do his bidding. Britain was once more isolated. In 1807 she sent a fleet to bombard Copenhagen and prevent the Danish fleet from falling into Napoleon's hands.

### **Napoleon's Continental System**

After Trafalgar Napoleon adopted further means of ruining the 'nation of shopkeepers,' as he styled the British. At Berlin in 1806 and at Milan in 1807 he issued the decrees that established the Continental System. All countries under Napoleon's rule were forbidden to trade with Britain. They were not allowed to buy British goods or goods from British colonies, and were even ordered to exclude neutral ships which had called at British ports. The Tsar at Tilsit had agreed to observe these regulations, and, as Napoleon controlled most of the rest of Europe, British trade and industry were very seriously affected by this continental blockade. But Britain did not take it lying down.

Firstly, the blockade was never completely effective. Europe needed the cloth and manufactures of Britain and the tobacco and sugar of her colonies, and was willing to pay high prices for them. Consequently a great deal of smuggling took place through Heligoland, Malta, Sicily, the Ionian Isles, and other convenient spots. As a counterstroke Napoleon extended French control along the north German coast and farther south into Italy, but he failed to stop entirely what was so profitable to all concerned. At times even his own soldiers were clothed and shod in British manufactures. This, it might be objected, was helping the enemy, but it was also helping ourselves, for it kept British workers and merchants employed.



Secondly, Britain replied by declaring a counter-blockade. The Orders in Council, 1807 (so-called because they were issued, not through Parliament, but through the Privy Council by virtue of the royal prerogative of regulating trade), declared in effect that all countries which excluded British goods would be prevented from obtaining the goods of other overseas countries. This counter-blockade was enforced by the navy, which searched neutral ships and made them call at British ports to obtain the necessary licences. This led to friction with neutrals, and particularly with the United States with whom, in 1812, it produced a short war. But it was a deadly weapon as it deprived Europe of all outside products; it was at this time that the manufacture of sugar from sugar-beet was developed on the Continent to make up for the loss of West Indian sugar.

The Continental System injured Britain, it is true, but together with the British counter-blockade it recoiled on Napoleon's head. Europe chafed under these restraints and in time revolted against her master. In Spain and Portugal, then in Russia, and finally in central Europe, the Continental System was an important factor producing those national revolts that eventually overwhelmed Napoleon.

### **The Beginning of the Peninsular War**

When Portugal refused to close her ports against British goods, Napoleon sent Marshal Junot and an army to force Portugal into submission (1807). Junot entered Lisbon, but the Portuguese royal family had already escaped to Brazil on board a British ship. Spain had associated herself with the French bully, but her own turn came in the following year. Napoleon induced the Spanish king to meet him at Bayonne and then forced him to abdicate. Napoleon's brother, Joseph, was then proclaimed King of Spain. The Spaniards revolted and in July, 1808, compelled a French army to surrender at Baylen. Canning and Castlereagh were quick to seize the opportunity thus offered, and an army was despatched to the Spanish peninsula under Sir Arthur Wellesley.



Wellesley (1769-1852), the future Duke of Wellington, was born in the same year as his arch-enemy Napoleon. He had served with the Duke of York in Flanders (1794) where he had learnt "how not to do it." In 1803 he had helped his elder brother, Marquis Wellesley, who was Governor-General of India, by defeating the wild Mahratta tribes at Assaye and Argaum. He was now sent to try his luck against the French. In August, 1808, he defeated Junot at Vimiero, but he was robbed of the fruits of his victory by the act of Sir Hew Dalrymple who superseded him at this juncture. By the Convention of Cintra Junot was allowed to escape with his army on condition that he evacuated Portugal! Wellesley and the other commanders were recalled, and a new general, Sir John Moore, appointed in their place.

### **Britain's Advantages in the Peninsular War**

The Peninsular War lasted till the first downfall of Napoleon in 1814. It provided Britain with her first real chance of combining her superior naval power with her smaller military resources and thus coming to grips with Napoleon. The navy could be used to convey troops and stores and to stand by in case of evacuations. With Lisbon as its base, the British army could push inland up the river-valleys, safe in the knowledge that it had an easy line of retreat to the coast again. The French lines of communication were far more difficult to hold, for the French had to cross the Pyrenees to enter Spain and then climb further mountain-ranges running from east to west before they reached the scene of operations. Their task was made all the more difficult, and ours correspondingly easier, by the attitude of the native Spanish and Portuguese. These engaged in ceaseless guerrilla warfare against the French—a type of warfare (with a Spanish name) for which the mountainous and barren countryside was well fitted. The native peasantry destroyed their food and homes rather than allow them to fall into the hands of the invader. Well might Spain be described as a "land where large armies starve and small armies get beaten." Britain was fortunate too in her com-



mander, the Duke of Wellington. Wellington was a hunting man with a good eye for the lie of the land, and although (with some justification) he described his troops as recruited from "the scum of the earth" and took few pains to win their affection, he yet won their confidence by his ability, while they won his (and Napoleon's) admiration by their courage. With French officers and British privates, Napoleon remarked, he could conquer the world. Napoleon entrusted the conduct of the war to his marshals. These were able men but lacking the genius of their master, and their quarrels often spoilt their chances.

The importance of the Peninsular War in contributing to Napoleon's overthrow lay in its continuance over a course of six years rather than in its magnitude at any given moment. It was a constant threat to Napoleon's flank, tying up nearly a quarter of a million troops often badly needed elsewhere. Napoleon compared the war to a running sore and remarked, "It was the Spanish ulcer that ruined me." Moreover, it put fresh heart into Napoleon's enemies, who saw French armies being beaten for the first time. In time other nations began similar revolts.

### **Corunna (January, 1809)**

In the winter of 1808 Sir John Moore with an army of 30,000 was faced by an invasion of 250,000 French troops led by Napoleon in person. Napoleon advanced to Madrid intent on subjugating southern Spain and Portugal. Moore, realizing the futility of direct resistance, saved the peninsula by marching north-eastward, getting behind Napoleon, and cutting his communications. Napoleon changed his plans to deal with Moore first. Turning his army round he pursued the British who retreated northward, but news of a rising in Austria caused him to leave the pursuit to Marshal Soult. Moore retreated to Corunna where a British fleet was ready to take off men and stores, but the brave British general lost his life in a rearguard action fought to cover the embarkation (January, 1809).



## **The Peninsular War continued**

In 1809 the British government planned to continue the Peninsular War and also to threaten Napoleon nearer home by sending an expedition to the port of Antwerp on the Scheldt. This latter expedition, led by Chatham (Pitt's elder brother), proved a complete failure. Valuable time was wasted, and although the island of Walcheren was occupied, an outbreak of fever killed off numerous troops. Disputes over this ill-starred expedition produced the famous duel between Canning, the Foreign Secretary, and Castlereagh, the Secretary at War.

The renewal of the Peninsular War was more successful. Wellesley had been acquitted of all blame for the Convention of Cintra and was despatched once more to Portugal. He now began his annual task of emerging, like a spiteful summer insect, to plague the French, and then retreating for the winter to his base at Lisbon where his lines of communication were secured by the navy. In 1809 he defeated the French at Talavera, after which he was made Viscount Wellington. By 1814 he had risen to the highest rank in the peerage, that of Duke.

In 1810 Napoleon sent Masséna with large forces to try to finish off the tiresome Spanish business. Wellington had to assume the defensive. At Busaco he won a victory which safeguarded his retreat to the lines of Torres Vedras—three lines of fortifications, between the River Tagus and the sea, protecting the peninsula on which Lisbon stood. Behind Torres Vedras Wellington's troops spent the winter of 1810-1811 in comfort, well supplied with provisions by sea; Wellington actually imported hounds to engage in hunting! Outside Torres Vedras Masséna and his men were likewise hunting—but hunting for food in a countryside laid waste by the British and Portuguese before retiring. During 1811 Wellington lay low, but early in 1812 he captured the two fortresses of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajos which guarded the roads into Spain. In July, 1812, Wellington won a great victory at Salamanca and occupied Madrid. Napoleon received news of the disaster during his own fateful invasion of Russia. In 1813 Wellington



once more emerged from Lisbon, and in June inflicted a severe defeat on Joseph Bonaparte at Vittoria on the Spanish side of the Pyrenees. In the autumn Wellington entered south-west France—the first hostile commander to invade France since the early years of the French Revolution. In April, 1814, he defeated Soult at Toulouse and learnt that Paris had accepted the Bourbons.

### **War with the U.S.A. (1812-1814)**

Before the final overthrow of Napoleon is described, a brief account is necessary of the war between Britain and the U.S.A. which broke out in 1812. American feeling towards Britain was embittered by the Orders in Council which prevented the U.S.A. from trading with Europe, and also by the high-handed way in which British ships often searched American ships for deserters. A certain lingering antagonism towards Britain and the memory of French help in their struggle for independence made matters worse; but the real cause was the recurring question of the freedom of the seas. In face of American retaliation against British goods, the Orders in Council were eventually dropped, but just too late to prevent the outbreak of war.

At sea, fights between individual ships ended generally in favour of the Americans, except in the celebrated engagement outside Boston harbour when the British *Shannon* forced the American *Chesapeake* to surrender in fifteen minutes. The Americans attempted an invasion of Canada and burnt Toronto, but they were driven back by the Canadians, both sections of whom remained loyal. In revenge a British force landed in the States and burnt the public buildings at Washington. The President's residence was afterwards painted white to hide its scars and thus became known as the White House.

The Treaty of Ghent (1814) ended this foolish war. Nothing definite was said about the rights of neutral shipping, and although Britain gave up her extravagant claim to control both sides of the Great Lakes, the exact frontier between Canada and the U.S.A. was left for future discussion. Unfortunately



peace was signed too late to prevent a force of Peninsular veterans from landing at New Orleans early in 1815 and suffering much needless loss of life. Britain and the U.S.A. have had many differences since and feelings have sometimes become inflamed, but these later differences have always been settled, eventually, by peaceful means.

### **The Overthrow of Napoleon**

In 1812 (the year of Salamanca) Napoleon embarked on his Russian campaign, when, after being lured on to the burning city of Moscow, he was obliged to retreat in the heart of a Russian winter. His appalling losses—roughly eleven out of every twelve soldiers failed to reach France—encouraged the formation of the Fourth Coalition (1813) with Prussia, Russia, Sweden, and soon Austria as its chief Continental members and with Britain, as usual, supplying money. Napoleon won a victory at Dresden, but in October, 1813, he suffered an overwhelming defeat at the three-days' battle of Leipzig, the so-called 'battle of the nations.' Under the guidance of Lord Castlereagh, the British Foreign Secretary, a new Quadruple Alliance was formed between Britain, Austria, Russia, and Prussia. Each ally was to place 150,000 men in the field and Britain was to provide £5,000,000 yearly. France was exhausted and weary and in April, 1814, Napoleon signed his abdication. He was made Emperor of the small island of Elba off Italy! In France the brother of Louis XVI was made king with the title of Louis XVIII—the missing number being Louis XVI's son who had died in prison during the Revolution.

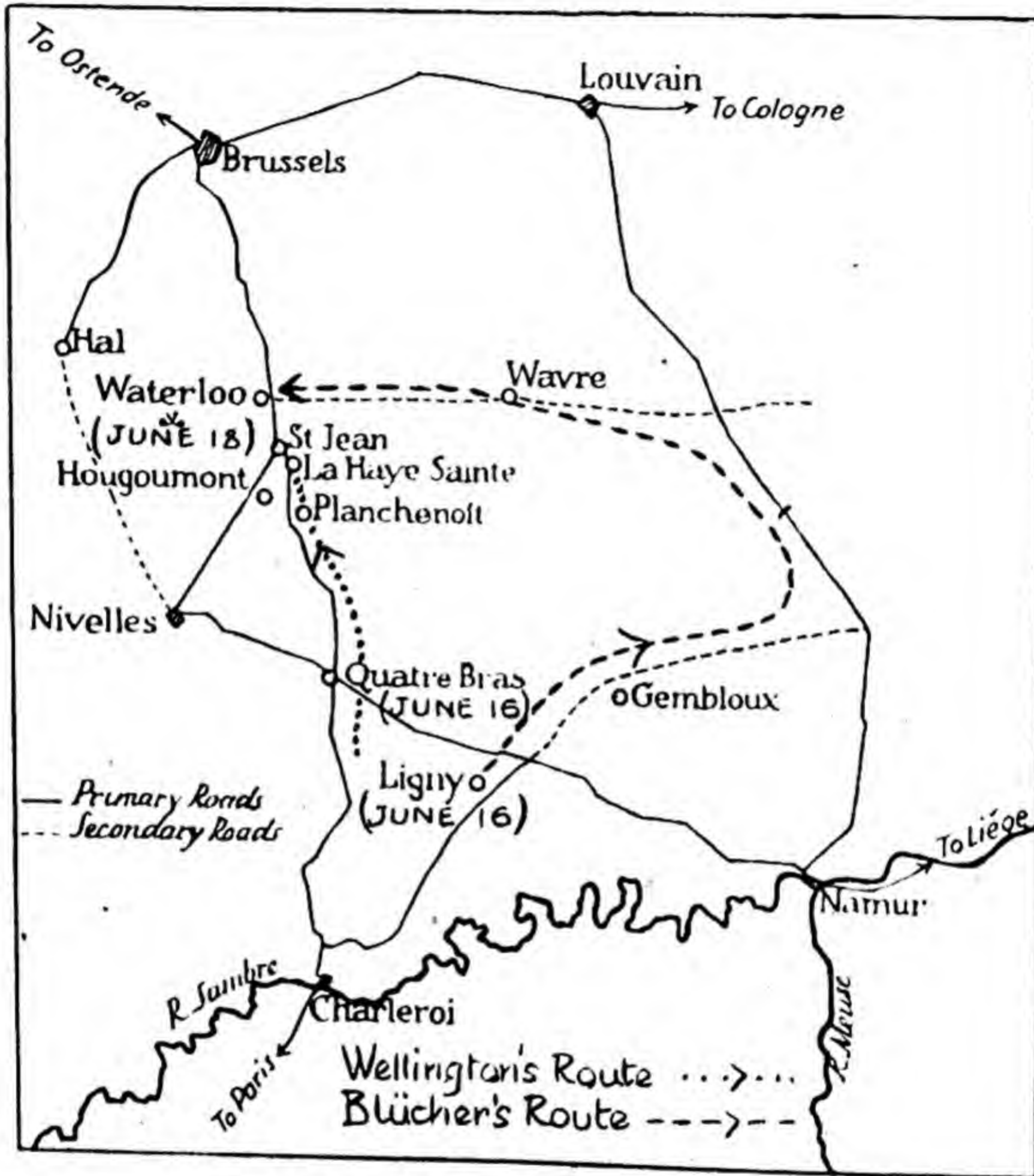
By the first Treaty of Paris the French frontiers were fixed at those of November 1, 1792. France also received back all her colonies, except Tobago, St Lucia, and Mauritius, which went to Britain. A Congress was summoned at Vienna to redraw the map of Europe.

### **The 'Hundred Days' and Waterloo (1815)**

The restored Bourbons were unpopular in France and the statesmen at Vienna quarrelled over the peace terms. Napoleon



seized his opportunity, escaped from Elba, and landed in France on March 1, 1815. The soldiers sent to arrest him formed in under his standard and Napoleon entered Paris on March 20 amid scenes of wild enthusiasm. He proclaimed his good intentions, but the allies would have none of him, and the four great powers began to mobilize their armies once more. By June



THE WATERLOO CAMPAIGN

two of these armies were ready: a mixed force of British, Dutch, Belgians, and Germans under Wellington, and a Prussian army under Blücher. They were to meet in Belgium for a joint attack upon France. Napoleon left Paris on June 12, intending to defeat his enemies in detail before they could unite.

The main part of Wellington's army was at Brussels, but there was an advance force sixteen miles south at Quatre Bras. Blücher with his Prussians was at Ligny, a few miles south-east



of Quatre Bras. On June 16 Marshal Ney advanced to Quatre Bras, while Napoleon engaged the Prussians at Ligny. Blücher, though defeated, was able to withdraw most of his troops northward to Wavre. Quatre Bras was less decisive, but the British retreated to keep in touch with the Prussians to the east. Napoleon sent Grouchy in pursuit of Blücher and rejoined Ney to lead the main attack upon Wellington's forces, which had taken up their stand on rising ground at Waterloo.

The battle began about 11 A.M. on June 18. Wellington had 68,000 men (of whom 24,000 were British) against Napoleon's 72,000. All day long the battle raged, Wellington's men lying down behind the crest of the hill when bombarded, and forming squares when attacked by cavalry charges. Of the two farms, Hougoumont and La Haye Sainte, in British hands, the former was held against all attacks, but the latter was captured by Ney. Finally, at about 7 P.M., Napoleon gave the order for the advance of the Old Guard, but they failed to break the British line. Wellington then ordered a general advance, and, as by this time the Prussians, eluding Grouchy, were arriving in large numbers, the French retreat soon became a rout.

Napoleon abdicated a second time (June, 1815) thus ending his reign of a 'hundred days.' He surrendered to the British warship *Bellerophon* at Rochefort and was banished to the island of St Helena, where he died in 1821. Louis XVIII returned to his throne, and the second Treaty of Paris (1815) imposed somewhat harsher, but still not severe, terms upon France. Her boundaries were reduced to the limits of 1789; she had to pay an indemnity of £28,000,000, support an army of occupation for five years, and restore all works of art.

### **Britain's Gains from the War**

Britain, in common with all the belligerents and many neutrals, had suffered heavily from the wars. Apart from the inevitable bloodshed, economic distress resulted which outlasted the war by many years. But Britain had played a considerable part in thwarting Napoleon's schemes. Her navy had proved Napoleon's biggest obstacle and had enabled her to



continue the struggle longer than any other nation. Her statesmen and her wealth had supported coalitions. The Continental System, aimed against her commerce, had goaded Europe into revolt. For six years she had threatened Napoleon's flank in the Spanish peninsula, while the stronger military powers of the Continent were preparing their frontal attacks. Finally it was British generalship, aided largely by British troops, that had ended Napoleon's 'last phase' at Waterloo.

Britain accordingly made territorial gains by the Treaties of Paris and Vienna which ended the war. From France she obtained the West Indian sugar islands of St Lucia and Tobago, as well as Mauritius in the Indian Ocean. Spain yielded Trinidad; and Holland yielded the Cape of Good Hope, Ceylon, and part of Guiana in South America. But Britain restored Java to the Dutch, to whom she also advanced a loan for frontier defence work. In European waters Britain kept Heligoland and Malta, and established a protectorate over the Ionian Isles. In area these gains were small compared with the spoils of other victor powers, but they had immense strategical and commercial importance and they laid the foundations of the second British Empire.

The remainder of the settlement at Vienna set the stage for the European drama in the nineteenth century and is more conveniently deferred till a later chapter.

### QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Describe, with the aid of a sketch map, either the battle of Trafalgar or the Waterloo campaign.
2. What do you associate with the following places: Austerlitz, Tilsit, Copenhagen, Corunna, Walcheren, Torres Vedras?
3. Describe Napoleon's Continental System and the British reply, and estimate their results upon the European struggle.
4. Summarize the part played by Britain in the struggle against Napoleon.
5. Draw a sketch map to illustrate Britain's gains in 1815.
6. Discuss in class the problems raised by the question of the 'freedom of the seas.'



## CHAPTER VII

### IRELAND IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

#### **'The City of the Broken Treaty'**

IT will be recalled that Irish attempts to resist the Glorious Revolution of 1689 had been frustrated by the victory of William III over James II at the Boyne (1690). In the following year the conquest of Ireland was completed, and by the Treaty of Limerick Irishmen were allowed to emigrate to join foreign armies and Irish Catholics were to enjoy the rights they had possessed under Charles II.

The first part of this treaty was observed, and thousands of Irishmen left their native land to enlist in foreign armies. In the eighteenth century Austria and Spain had Irish regiments; an Irishman, Peter Lacy, became a Russian general; France had an Irish Brigade which found satisfaction in helping towards England's defeat at Fontenoy in 1745.

The second and more important part of the treaty was shamefully broken and Limerick therefore became known as 'The City of the Broken Treaty.' One of the first acts of the English Parliament was to exclude Catholics from the Irish Parliament, which then proceeded during the next thirty or forty years to pass a series of laws, known collectively as Penal Laws, subjecting Catholics to all sorts of indignities. Ireland in the eighteenth century may be likened to a three-tiered pyramid, the higher layers pressing heavily on those beneath, and the whole structure held firmly down by a foreign body squatting comfortably upon the top. The foreign body was England; the top layer was the Irish Protestant minority which controlled the Irish Parliament; the second layer was the Presbyterian element in Ulster, descendants of Scottish settlers; the unhappy bottom layer, bearing the whole burden, was composed of the native Catholics who constituted four-fifths of the total population.



## Irish Grievances

(1) *Political*. Ireland was governed by a Viceroy or Lord-Lieutenant appointed by England. He was always a Protestant and, in common with other highly placed Irish officials, was usually English. Ireland possessed a Parliament of her own, sitting at Dublin; but only Protestants could vote for members or be elected. Rotten and pocket boroughs and intimidation by landlords prevented this Irish Parliament from truly representing even Irish Protestant opinion. Finally the English Parliament, by Poynings' Law (1494) and other acts, could override the Irish Parliament by vetoing its acts or by passing fresh acts.

(2) *Religious*. Elizabeth had established a Protestant Church of Ireland (really a branch of the English Church), but, except in acquiring power and wealth, it had made little headway. It possessed broad estates and rich endowments which provided 'plums' for English office-seekers. Its bishops were often absentees appointed to give their votes in the Irish House of Lords. The Irish peasantry paid tithes to support this alien church, while their own church was subject to all kinds of legal restraints. Ulster Presbyterians did not enjoy the advantages of the Toleration Act of 1689 and were excluded from numerous offices. The Catholic peasantry were far worse off. Their bishops and deans were expelled; their priests, recruited only from the native Irish, had to be registered. After paying tithes to what he considered an heretical church and rent to an alien landlord, the wretched peasant had to find the dues necessary for the support of his own church.

(3) *Economic*. At various periods in her history Ireland had been the unhappy hunting-ground of Protestant land-grabbers from Scotland and England. Most of her land was in alien hands, held usually by absentee landlords whose only interest was to squeeze, through their agents, as much rent as possible from the peasantry. If a peasant improved his land, the rent might be raised and he would be no better off. If he protested, he could be evicted. His staple food was the potato. Ireland



was regarded as a colony and treated for the benefit of the mother-country in accordance with the ideas of the Old Colonial System. Lest she should compete with the English farmer a statute of Charles II forbade the export of Irish cattle, sheep, or swine to England. When the Irish turned to the manufacture of woollens, they were forbidden to export wool or woollen cloth to any country but England, and England then imposed heavy tariffs to keep it out! The linen industry of Belfast received some encouragement because it did not compete with any major English industry. This view of Ireland as a source of profit produced the episode of Wood's halfpence (see *p.* 21) which was scotched by the opposition of Dean Swift in his *Drapier's Letters*. "Am I a freeman in England and do I become a slave in six hours by crossing the Channel?" Swift pertinently asked.

(4) *Social*. In their everyday lives the Irish Catholics were subject to prohibitions at every turn. No Catholic could teach in a school, act as a guardian, send his children abroad to be educated, carry arms, own much property, marry a Protestant who owned property, or possess a horse worth more than five pounds. Protestants had the ridiculous right of forcing a Catholic to accept five pounds for any horse thought to be above this value.

These, and many similar restrictions, were too harsh to be enforced strictly. That Ireland did not revolt is due partly to the cowed condition of the peasantry and partly to the emigration of the bolder spirits to foreign countries. Irish Protestants also contributed much to English life in the eighteenth century, as witness such names as Swift, Goldsmith, Sheridan, and Burke.

### **Henry Grattan and the Repeal of Poynings' Law (1782)**

The second half of the eighteenth century brought some relief to Ireland. During the American War of Independence Britain withdrew most of her troops from Irish soil. Contrary to what might have been expected, Ireland did not revolt, but all classes and creeds combined to raise a force of Irish Volun-



teers to protect the country from foreign invasion. But the Volunteers aimed also at freeing Ireland from British restraints and they found an able leader in Henry Grattan. Grattan (1746–1820) was an Irish Protestant who had entered the Irish House of Commons in 1775. His lifelong aim was to free all classes of Irishmen from the numerous restrictions to which they were subjected while at the same time he wished to preserve the connexion with Great Britain. He worked successively for the removal of commercial restraints, for the independence of the Irish Parliament, and for complete Catholic Emancipation—*i.e.*, equality as between Catholics and Protestants. “The Irish Parliament can never be free while the Catholic is a slave,” he said. Later he opposed the Act of Union of 1800 which merged the Irish Parliament in the combined Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland.

He was one of the greatest of Irish orators and with the Irish Volunteers at his back was able to extort concessions from Britain. In 1778 Britain encouraged the Irish Parliament to repeal the laws prohibiting Catholics from buying land. In 1780 Britain repealed the Commercial Code and as a result industries were freed from their restrictions and Irish traders could share in the trade of the Empire on the same terms as Scotland. In 1782 Poynings’ Law (1494) and a subsequent act of 1719 were repealed and the Irish Parliament became independent of British control. The new Irish Parliament, often called Grattan’s Parliament, still left much to be desired. It was restricted to Protestant voters and Protestant members, and over two hundred of its three hundred members were controlled by English owners of Irish rotten boroughs. None the less for the next eighteen years (1782–1800) the Irish Protestant party enjoyed legislative independence. It was Grattan’s Parliament that in 1785 rejected Pitt’s scheme for a new commercial treaty between Britain and Ireland.

### **Ireland and the French Revolution**

The French Revolution, with its proclamation of the equality of man and its challenge to existing governments and institu-



tions, naturally had a profound effect upon Ireland. In 1791 an extreme Irishman, Wolfe Tone, founded the Society of United Irishmen which aimed at uniting all Irishmen irrespective of creed and winning the complete independence of Ireland from England. Despite the fact that Grattan and the moderates disapproved of the new organization, it was supported by large masses of the population, especially by the Catholics and the Ulster Presbyterians, both of whom suffered from the ascendancy of the Anglican Church. To allay the discontent, Pitt persuaded the Irish Parliament in 1793 to pass certain measures of relief for the Irish Catholics. Henceforth they were allowed to vote for members of Parliament, to sit on juries, and to occupy certain positions from which they had long been debarred.

This half-measure (for Catholics were still excluded from sitting in Parliament) only served to increase the demand for full Catholic Emancipation from the remaining penal laws. In 1795 Pitt's Viceroy of Ireland, Lord Fitzwilliam, announced his intention of bringing proposals for Catholic Emancipation before the Irish Parliament. His action was supported by Grattan, who saw in this the only sure means of keeping Catholic Ireland loyal. Unfortunately Fitzwilliam had exceeded or misunderstood his instructions, and the British government disavowed the Viceroy's proposals and recalled their author to England. This naturally increased Catholic discontent. The United Irishmen, by now almost exclusively Catholic, began to attack the Protestants, who in defence organized societies of Orangemen. Wolfe Tone sought French support in his efforts to throw off the English yoke. In 1796 a French expedition under Hoche reached Bantry Bay but was dispersed by storms. In the following year a similar expedition again failed. In 1797 the British government ordered the disarming of Ulster and other parts of Ireland. Orangemen, assisted by foreign soldiers sent over by Britain, seized this opportunity to take revenge upon the Catholics, and all kinds of oppressions and brutalities resulted. The goaded Catholics rose in revolt.



### **The Irish Rebellion (1798)**

The desire for Parliamentary reform and for Catholic Emancipation, the recent atrocities which led many Catholics to the belief that their extermination was part of English policy, and the objection of the Catholic peasantry to the payment of tithes for the support of the Irish Protestant Church—all these combined to produce the rebellion of 1798. It was soon suppressed. The romantic leader, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, was arrested before the revolt began. Only the south-eastern counties of Wexford and Wicklow were seriously affected and here the rebels were defeated at Vinegar Hill. French help arrived too late, and Wolfe Tone was captured and put in prison, where he committed suicide. The importance of the rebellion lies in its results—the bitter memories it left behind and the determination of Pitt to prevent further outbreaks and to rob the French of a potential ally by binding Ireland more closely to England.

### **The Act of Union (1800)**

Pitt sent over a new Viceroy, Lord Cornwallis, who sensibly put an end to the barbarities of both Protestants and Catholics. Then he and his Chief Secretary, Castlereagh, applied themselves to their main task, the abolition of the separate Irish Parliament. This involved persuading the Irish peers and borough-mongers to give up their own separate representation, which was no easy matter. It was achieved by wholesale bribery. Forty-one persons were created peers or raised a step in the peerage, and over £1,250,000 was paid out to compensate the owners of pocket-boroughs. The Act of Union was passed in 1800 by the two Parliaments at Dublin and Westminster. It was strongly opposed by Grattan.

The combined Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland was to contain one hundred Irish M.P.'s, four Irish bishops selected in rotation, and twenty-eight Irish peers elected for life by the whole body of the Irish peerage. The Irish Protestant Church was to continue with its privileges and its rich endowments.



Ireland was to contribute two-seventeenths towards the revenue of the United Kingdom, and free trade was established between Ireland and Great Britain. Irish executive government was to continue under a Viceroy sent out by England.

Irish Catholics had been led to assume that the union would be followed by Catholic Emancipation, although Pitt had not given any explicit promise to this effect. But when Pitt broached the question, George III declared Emancipation contrary to his coronation oath and stated he would rather "lay his head on the block" than sign such a measure. The unfortunate Pitt yielded to his blockheaded master, and, feeling he had deceived the Irish, resigned in 1801. For the next three years Addington ruled the country till the war situation brought Pitt back into office with the promise that he would not revive the question of Emancipation.

Pitt's Irish policy diminished the immediate danger from Ireland but it left that country very dissatisfied. To the existing causes of discontent—Protestant ownership of Irish land and the exaction of tithes to support a Protestant Church—were now added the hated union with England and the feeling that Ireland had been tricked over the question of Catholic Emancipation.

### QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Write notes on: 'The City of the Broken Treaty,' Wood's halfpence, Irish Volunteers, United Irishmen, Orangemen.
2. Summarize Irish grievances in the eighteenth century.
3. Compare and contrast Henry Grattan and Wolfe Tone in their aims and methods.
4. Describe Pitt's Irish policy 1783-1801. To what extent can he be blamed for deceiving Ireland over Catholic Emancipation?



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

#### **What the Industrial Revolution means**

IN 1700 the population of England and Wales was about 6 millions, most of whom lived in the south in country districts and supported themselves by agriculture and cottage industries. In good years England exported her surplus agricultural produce. Industries, of which the woollen was the most important, were carried on by hand. Most of those people who worked for capitalist employers still did so in their own homes under the so-called domestic system.

By 1900 the population of England and Wales had risen to well over 30 millions, most of whom lived in towns clustered round the coal-fields of the midlands and the north. They worked in factories and workshops, mines and mills, producing articles which a vastly improved transport system distributed over the whole world. Steam-power and electricity had replaced human and animal strength. England was importing most of her food and many raw materials and in return exported manufactured goods and coal. Cottage industries had disappeared; the town worker was a mere 'hand,' the country worker a landless agricultural labourer.

The term 'Industrial Revolution' is given to these vast changes. In a sense, with the development of electricity and the aeroplane, the revolution is still proceeding. In this chapter, however, we shall consider the seed-time of the revolution which, broadly speaking, coincided with the reign of George III (1760-1820).

#### **Britain the Pioneer of the Industrial Revolution**

It was in Britain that the earliest inventions were for the most part made, and she was well-placed to take full advantage of them. She was united and free from invasion, while other countries were as yet either disunited or undeveloped. Her



merchants and capitalists had built up reserves of capital which could be used to exploit the new processes. Centuries of commercial experience and the possession of strong merchant and royal navies enabled her to capture world markets. Economically she was already one of the most 'modern' of European nations, free from the internal trade restrictions, the worst of the gild regulations, and the serfdom that hampered France, Russia, and the several hundred German states. She faced the Atlantic, had good ports and ice-free rivers, and her damp climate suited the growth of the textile industries. Above all, she possessed abundant and well-placed supplies of coal, and coal was the philosopher's stone of the new industrial era, transmuting raw materials into profit-making finished goods. It was the fuel of the new iron age and of the steam-power which drove the new machines and later the locomotives and steamships. Its weight and bulk made it uneconomical to transport over long distances, and British coal-fields soon became huge magnets attracting English and Irish peasants from their green fields, ores and metals from home and abroad, china-clay from Cornwall, and raw cotton and wool from the U.S.A. and Australia.

#### (A) AGRICULTURE

##### **The Old Order**

Despite the enclosures of earlier centuries about one-half of the arable land of the country was still unenclosed in 1700. Of this the most important area was a wide belt stretching from Yorkshire through the Midlands to Dorset.

The open-field system was very wasteful. The balks between the strips grew nothing, and men wasted time in attending to their scattered strips. Every year one-third of the arable land lay fallow. Initiative was stifled, for every one had to follow the age-old customs of the village, while the weeds of the lazy peasant would spread to the strips of his neighbours. Scientific stock-breeding and the checking of animal diseases were impossible on the common pastures. There had been little advance in knowledge since the Middle Ages; the turnip and



other root crops for winter fodder were practically unknown, and many of the cattle were still killed in the autumn and salted down for winter.

But the system had the advantage that in country districts most people possessed some land or some rights over land, and this, with the cottage industries then practised, made an assured if scanty livelihood generally possible. But there was a growing demand for food which the open-field system could not satisfy. Population was increasing; the number of town-dwellers was rising as a result of the industrial changes; wars produced a scarcity that sent up prices and provided the necessary stimulus for increased production. The situation was met in two ways: by improvements in the technique of farming and by enclosures.

### Improving Landlords

In 1731 Jethro Tull of Berkshire published his book *Horsehoeing Husbandry*. He advocated two improvements which he had observed among the vineyards of southern France. The first was regular sowing in straight lines instead of the old method of broadcasting the seed; for this purpose he invented a seed-drill. The second, possible only where the seed was regularly sown, was the value of hoeing between the rows of growing crops. At the same time Viscount Townshend, forced by his brother-in-law Walpole to resign from the government, was improving his estates at Rainham in Norfolk. Townshend put body into his sandy soil by a process known as marling, *i.e.*, adding a mixture of lime and clay. Above all he popularized the growing of turnips and acquired thereby the nickname of 'Turnip' Townshend. The turnip provided a winter food for cattle; this facilitated stock-breeding and increased the manure available for the following spring. Since the turnip also, as a root-crop, cleansed the soil and extracted therefrom a different nourishment from corn crops, it enabled the fallow field to be dispensed with and a new rotation of crops to be introduced. The Norfolk four-course rotation was wheat, turnips, barley, and clover.



Stock-breeding was improved in the second half of the century. Robert Bakewell of Dishley Grange, Leicestershire, experimented with horses, cattle, and in particular sheep. Sheep had hitherto been bred mainly for their wool. Bakewell concentrated on meat production and his New Leicester breed of sheep soon spread all over the country. The brothers Charles and Robert Colling did the same for cattle by producing the Durham Shorthorn, valuable for both milk and beef.

George III's reign witnessed a speeding-up and a wider diffusion of the new processes. The King himself, nicknamed 'Farmer' George, interested himself in his Windsor estate and made the new movement fashionable. In Norfolk Thomas Coke of Holkham (later Earl of Leicester) devoted his long life (1752-1842) to improving his estates. He reclaimed land from the sea, planted trees, and experimented with all kinds of new ideas and inventions. Every year he held a sheep-shearing festival where new methods of farming were demonstrated. By increasing the yield from his estates he increased his rents from £2,200 to £20,000. The chief apostle of the new farming was Arthur Young, who made many tours throughout the country and by his writings and personal contacts spread knowledge from one district to another. In 1793 Young became secretary of the newly founded Board of Agriculture (a semi-official body not connected directly with the present Ministry) which for over twenty years issued reports for each county.

### **Enclosures**

Side by side with improvements in agricultural technique there occurred a widespread movement towards enclosure. In theory some of the improved methods, such as the Norfolk rotation, were possible under the open-field system. But in practice the necessary initiative and power to experiment were often only possible with enclosures; for large-scale farming and the segregation of stock enclosures were indispensable.

Enclosures signified the consolidation of holdings into large fields separated from one another by hedges, fences, or walls.



All kinds of land were subject to enclosure: the moorlands of the north, outlying waste land, the lord's demesne, and the common fields, whether arable, pasture, or meadow. The method employed was to obtain a private Act of Parliament, and in George III's reign 3,554 such acts were passed affecting 5,500,000 acres. In theory everyone's rights were respected and the poor should not have suffered. In practice the poor suffered very much, as was later admitted by Arthur Young, himself a keen champion of enclosures. "By nineteen enclosure bills in twenty the poor are injured, in some grossly injured." This was the result of many factors. The original petition for the act was often the work of the lord of the manor and his associates. Parliament was controlled by the land-owning classes and appointed friends of the squire and parson as commissioners to hear claims. Many tenants could not prove their rights in law; and where they could they had to meet heavy expenses, such as their share in the cost of getting the unwanted act passed, the cost of hedging or fencing their new fields, and their contribution towards enclosing the parson's land. Moreover, in many cases rights of pasturage on the common or of cutting fuel from the waste could not easily be compensated by the grant of a small piece of land.

### **Results of the Agricultural Revolution**

Productivity undoubtedly increased. In 1710 beeves averaged 370 lb. and sheep 28 lb; in 1795 the corresponding figures were 800 lb. and 80 lb. Production of crops also increased as a result of new methods and of new lands being brought under the plough. It has been estimated that in the eighteenth century over two million acres of new land were brought into cultivation. This helped the country in its grim struggle against Napoleon. None the less, as a result of industrialization and the growing population, Britain ceased to be self-supporting. 1792 was the last year in which she had an export surplus of wheat.

The small tenants (copyholders, cottagers, and squatters) suffered much as a result of the changes, while the new machinery also robbed them of their cottage spinning. The



high prices for agricultural produce during the Napoleonic wars increased for a time the number of 'yeomen' or freehold farmers; but after 1815 many of these declined and became, along with others, mere agricultural labourers, or else they drifted into the new towns. These changes, it has been said, resulted in fat beasts and thin men. The present typical English relations between landowner, tenant farmer, and landless labourer now became the rule, where previously they had been the exception.

Vain attempts were made by a few reformers to relieve rural poverty. Then in 1795 the magistrates of Berkshire, meeting at the Pelican Inn in the village of Speenhamland near Newbury, decided to give help to the poor from the rates. Farm labourers' wages were to be made up to a definite sum varying with the price of bread and the size of the family. This was a well-meaning effort and was better than nothing, but in the long run it had disastrous results. The Speenhamland system spread throughout much of England, especially in the south, and resulted in farmers depressing wages still more and in labourers becoming pauperized. At the same time harsh Game Laws made poaching punishable by transportation to Australia.

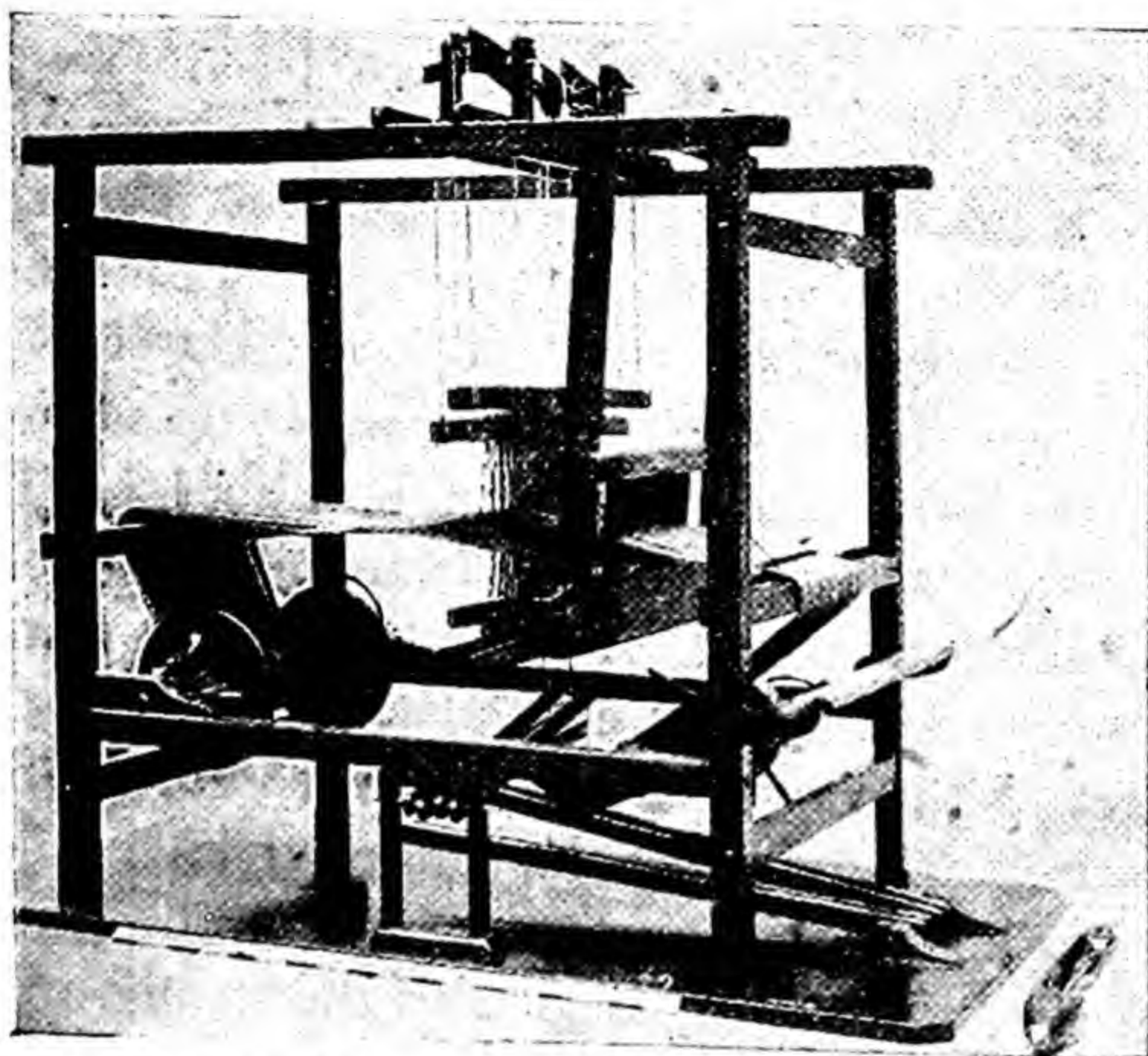
### (B) INDUSTRY

#### **The Textile Industries before the Revolution**

On the eve of the Industrial Revolution the woollen industry was easily the most important textile industry, as it had been for many centuries. Although scattered throughout the length and breadth of the country, it had three main centres: East Anglia, the south-west, and the West Riding of Yorkshire. The cotton industry, which dates only from about 1600, was located in Lancashire. It was handicapped by the competition of the woollen and silk industries which had obtained various acts of Parliament restricting to some extent the manufacture of cotton cloth. The silk industry was situated in the Spitalfields district of London and in Derbyshire; the chief centre of the linen industry was in Ireland round Belfast.



These industries were carried on mostly under the domestic system. The workers worked in their own houses on hand-machines (spinning-wheels and hand-loom) for wealthy merchant clothiers who sent out the raw material and collected



MODEL OF A HAND-LOOM IN USE PRIOR TO THE INVENTION  
OF THE FLYING SHUTTLE IN 1733

Victoria and Albert Museum  
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and marketed the finished product. But the factory system had already appeared in the Derbyshire silk industry, though in the West Riding woollen industry there were still many small independent manufacturers.

### **Textile Inventions**

The chief processes in the manufacture of cloth are the preparation of the raw material by washing, carding, and combing; then the spinning of it into yarn; thirdly, the weaving of the yarn into cloth on a loom by means of a stationary warp and a moving weft contained in a shuttle; and finally the finishing processes such as bleaching, dyeing, and printing.

In 1733 John Kay of Bury invented the flying shuttle. This enabled the weaver to jerk the shuttle through the warp, using



only one hand; by this means he could weave broadcloth unaided and could work much more quickly.

The supply of yarn, which had for long been insufficient, was now less than ever able to meet the demands of the weavers. The next three inventions remedied this situation. About 1764 James Hargreaves invented the spinning jenny, supposed to be named after his wife whose spinning-wheel, accidentally knocked over, gave him his idea. The jenny consisted of one large wheel which, when turned by hand, spun many cops of yarn instead of just one. In 1767 Richard Arkwright, a Preston barber and wig-maker, invented the water-frame which spun yarn through rollers moving at different speeds. The water-frame, worked at first by water and later by steam, paved the way for the factory system of which Arkwright himself was a pioneer. In 1779 Samuel Crompton (whose house at Hall-i'-th'-Wood, Bolton, is preserved as a museum) combined the ideas of Hargreaves and Arkwright in his mule which spun yarn fine enough for muslins hitherto imported from the East. Crompton, like all these inventors, was faced with the strong opposition of the hand-workers who saw their livelihood threatened. In 1785 steam-power was first applied to cotton-spinning.

As a result of these inventions the supply of yarn outstripped the ability of the weavers to use it; but in 1785 Edmund Cartwright, an Oxford don and Kentish clergyman, invented a power-loom, worked at first by a bull turning a wheel. It was some time before the power-loom became really practicable and longer still before it was widely adopted. The surplus of yarn and the demand for cloth for government orders during the wars attracted many newcomers into the hand-weaving industry. They enjoyed only a short-lived prosperity, for soon the profession became overcrowded and the plight of the hand-loom weaver grew steadily worse.

Other notable inventions during this period included cylindrical printing of cloth by Bell in 1784, and the use of chlorine for bleaching. In 1794 Eli Whitney of the U.S.A. invented a machine, called a 'gin' (from 'engine'), for separating the cotton-seed from the cotton-wool. In 1801 Jacquard of Lyons



in southern France invented the Jacquard loom suitable for weaving intricate patterns, especially in silk.

Cottage industries now decayed and the workers were collected in mills and factories. At first water-power was used and mills were built in the valleys of Yorkshire, Lancashire, and adjoining counties. Soon the advantage of steam-power caused the textile industries to concentrate near the coal-fields, and large, hurriedly built cotton and woollen towns sprang up in the north. East Anglia decayed as a woollen centre and devoted itself to agriculture. The south-west woollen industry also declined, though it never died out. The West Riding became the chief woollen district, while Lancashire concentrated on cotton. These districts had handy supplies of water and coal, while Lancashire's damp climate suited the spinning of cotton, which under dry conditions easily breaks. New sources of raw material were soon opened up—raw cotton from the U.S.A. and wool from Australia. As a result the textile industries expanded, the most startling expansion being in the cotton industry, whose cheap cloth suited the meagre pockets of the new industrial workers of England as well as the warmer climates and still more meagre pockets of the natives of the East. The cotton industry was more adaptable than the older-established woollen industry and made far greater use of the new inventions. It very soon outpaced the woollen industry, and cotton cloth became England's most valuable export throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

### **Iron and Coal**

Iron ore when smelted yields pig-iron, an impure product which is the basis for the later stages of manufacture. These take three main forms: cast iron, very brittle owing to its high degree of carbon impurity, and thus suitable only for casting; wrought iron, with practically no carbon, which can be hammered into the required shape; and steel where the carbon content is carefully controlled to produce hardness and flexibility.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century smelting was declining in England owing to the scarcity of charcoal. It was





MODERN BRITAIN: ECONOMIC FEATURES



also leaving its old centre, the Weald, for other wooded areas, such as the Forest of Dean. Much pig-iron had to be imported from Sweden. Experiments had been made with coal instead of charcoal as fuel, but the sulphurous gases from the coal mixed with the iron and made it too impure for use. About 1709 Abraham Darby of Coalbrookdale in Shropshire discovered that coal could be used if it were first coked. This revolutionized the iron-smelting industry, and England with its plentiful supplies of coal was able to make full use of the new process.

In 1740 Huntsman, a clockmaker, dissatisfied with the quality of the steel springs supplied to him, invented a process of heating the metal in small clay crucibles and thus burning away the impurities. After initial opposition the Sheffield cutlers adopted the new steel, but the Age of Steel did not really begin on a large scale till the inventions of Bessemer, Siemens, and Gilchrist Thomas in the second half of the nineteenth century.

In 1783-1784 Henry Cort revolutionized the production of wrought iron by two inventions. First was the use of grooved rollers, the grooves being cut to produce the required shape. The second was the puddling process in conjunction with the reverberatory furnace; the heat was made to strike down from the roof of the furnace and the molten metal was puddled or stirred to allow the impure gases to escape. Cort's processes produced a superior grade of wrought iron and speeded up production by fifteen times.

These discoveries naturally stimulated the manufacture of iron goods. In 1760 Roebuck founded the Carron Iron Works near Edinburgh, where his engineer, John Smeaton, used an improved blast. 'Iron-mad' Wilkinson, whose works were at Broseley near Coalbrookdale, made the first iron ship, bored the cylinders for Watt's steam-engines, and on his death left instructions to be buried in an iron coffin. Matthew Boulton of Soho, Birmingham, was the greatest hardware manufacturer of his age, and with James Watt produced the steam-engines that provided the power for the Industrial Revolution. Near Coalbrookdale the first iron bridge was built across the Severn.

A new Iron Age was soon in full swing, with coal and iron as



the basis of the modern industrial state. The old smelting districts decayed; in 1827 the last Sussex furnace was extinguished. New industrial centres grew up round the coal-fields of the north, midlands, and south Wales to supply the government with weapons of war and the new towns with cheap iron articles. In 1815 Sir Humphry Davy invented the miners' safety lamp; but mining continued to be very dangerous owing to the lower seams now being worked. During the century 1740-1840 Britain's production of pig-iron increased eighty-fold, and Britain became the 'workshop of the world.'

### **Steam-power**

Although steam-power was vaguely known to some of the ancients, its immense possibilities remained untapped till modern times. About 1700 an Englishman named Savery and a French Huguenot named Papin invented steam-engines. In 1705 Newcomen took out a patent for a steam-engine which came to be widely used for pumping water out of mines. Newcomen's engine was very costly to use, as the cylinder was alternately cooled and reheated and thus used large quantities of fuel. Its improvement was the work of James Watt.

James Watt (1736-1819) was the son of a Scottish shipwright. He spent the year 1755 in London learning the trade of mathematical instrument making and avoided going out at night for fear of press-gangs. On returning to Glasgow in 1756 he was forbidden by the local gild to set up shop as he had not served the customary apprenticeship. The university came to his rescue by allowing him to establish a shop inside its precincts. It was thus that he became acquainted with Newcomen's engine when he was given the university model to repair. In 1765 he made his first important improvement—the separate condenser into which the used steam was driven from the cylinder. This kept the cylinder hot and effected a large saving of fuel. In 1775 Watt entered into his famous partnership with Matthew Boulton, the hardware manufacturer of Soho near Birmingham. For the next twenty-five years Boulton and Watt had a monopoly in the manufacture of the



new steam engines. So far the steam engine could perform an up-and-down motion only and was used mainly for pumping water out of mines, especially the copper- and tin-mines of Cornwall. In 1781, with the help of his able foreman, William Murdoch (who later invented gas lighting), Watt made his second great improvement. This was the rotary movement produced by a device called the sun and planet. Henceforth the steam engine could be used to turn the wheels of industry, and in 1785 was first applied to a cotton-mill at Papplewick in Nottingham. Steam-power increased man's control over nature to an undreamt-of extent and ushered in Big Business and a new Machine Age. It did not altogether create the factory system, as early factories and mills had been built to use water-power. But it soon displaced water as the main source of power, and led to a vast expansion of the factory system and to the growth of large towns.

### (C) COMMUNICATIONS

#### **Roads**

The growing specialization between district and district and town and country necessitated an improvement in the means of transport. Pack-horses picking their way over muddy tracks, or cargo boats engaged in coastwise traffic or confined to the navigable portions of rivers, no longer met the nation's needs.

The roads had for long been under the care of the parishes, but these, working through unpaid surveyors and relying on forced or pauper labour, had neglected their task. In 1663 the first Turnpike Act was passed authorizing a turnpike trust to maintain a certain stretch of road and recoup itself by levying tolls at toll-bars placed at each end of its section. Turnpikes led to some spasmodic improvement, but they did not become common till the eighteenth century. After the Jacobite rebellion of 1745 the government itself built some roads for military purposes in the north of England and in Scotland. Between 1765 and 1792 a Yorkshireman, John Metcalfe, commonly known as 'Blind Jack of Knaresborough' from the infirmity which had afflicted him at the age of six, planned



nearly two hundred miles of road in the north. John MacAdam (1756–1836) improved road surfaces by the use of broken stone, bound together in his time by water and stone dust, but now by tar to give the modern tar macadam; much of his work was in the Bristol area. The greatest of the road builders was Thomas Telford, who constructed a thousand miles of roadway in Scotland and hundreds of bridges. His most famous work was planning the London-Holyhead road, for which he constructed the beautiful Menai Suspension Bridge which was opened in 1826. In 1784 Palmer, a theatre-manager of Bristol, began to make his famous coaches, designed to carry both passengers and mails. The heyday of coaching was in the 1820's and 1830's when an average speed of about 10 m.p.h. was maintained and such regularity observed that villages could set their clocks by the passing of the coach. In 1824 it took twenty-four hours to journey from Manchester to London—a distance covered by the modern railway in less than five hours.

### Canals

Although canals had for long been used on the Continent and in China, in 1750 they were still unknown in England. The first canal in this country was the Bridgewater Canal, commenced by the unlettered genius, James Brindley, in the year 1759. The part which connected the Duke of Bridgewater's coal-mines at Worsley with Manchester was opened in 1761 and reduced the cost of coal by one-half. The Duke was soon obtaining £80,000 a year from his canal; he had paid Brindley twenty-one shillings a week. Till his death in 1772 Brindley was employed incessantly in building and planning canals. He extended the original Bridgewater Canal to the mouth of the Mersey at Runcorn. He then worked on the Trent and Mersey Canal which was promoted by Josiah Wedgwood, the pottery manufacturer, and also planned canals joining Leeds and Liverpool, the Forth and Clyde, and the Severn and the Black Country. His early death prevented him from seeing the fruits of most of his labours. His illiteracy gave us the word 'navvy'—Brindley's spelling of the navigators who dug out the course.



After 1790 a boom took place in canal-building. The road-builder Telford was responsible for many of the later canals, including the Caledonian Canal (1823). For half a century canals played an important part in carrying heavy imperishable goods like coal, ore, and china clay; but after 1840 they rapidly declined in face of the competition of the railways. The Manchester Ship Canal, opened in 1894, was built to enable ocean-going vessels to reach Manchester and was quite different in its purpose from the tow-path canals of a century earlier.

### (D) ECONOMIC THOUGHT

#### **From Mercantilism to *Laissez-faire***

At the same time as all these changes a revolution was taking place in economic doctrine and policy. For several centuries the economic life of the country had been closely regulated according to the doctrines of mercantilism. In the eighteenth century mercantile regulation gave way to *laissez-faire*, which meant that the government's policy was now to interfere as little as possible in the economic life of the country.

This new outlook suited the temper of the age. Many of the old restrictions were an undoubted hindrance to economic expansion. The governing classes, too, scared by the doctrines of the French Revolution, were little inclined to interfere, in the interests of the workers, with the free play of economic forces. Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (1776) attacked out-of-date restrictions, and preached instead free competition as the surest way to national prosperity. In 1798 the gloomy parson, Thomas Malthus, published his *Essay on Population* in which he argued that it was useless to try to raise the standard of life of the poor because there would never be enough food to support a fast-growing population.

The government therefore swept away the old restrictions and then folded its arms. When the workers appealed for the fixing of wages under the Statute of Apprentices the act was repealed (1813-1814). Yet when the workers themselves combined to improve their conditions, Parliament passed the Anti-Combina-



tion Acts of 1799 and 1800, making trade unions illegal. Amid such injustices was industrial England born.

### Note on Population Changes

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries people moved from the countryside to the towns, and from the south to the midlands and the north. The population also increased in size. In 1801 the first census was taken and this was followed by one every ten years. The causes of this increase were twofold: a higher birth-rate and a lower death-rate. Lower mortality was itself the result of many factors such as the gradually rising standard of living, improved hygiene, and increased knowledge of medicine, all of which took place despite the horrors of the Industrial Revolution. Vaccination against smallpox, for instance, was discovered by Edward Jenner in 1798.

### POPULATION FIGURES

				England and Wales	Great Britain
1500	-	-	-	4 millions	—
1600	-	-	-	5 millions	—
1700	-	-	-	6 millions	—
1750	-	-	-	7 millions	—
1801	-	-	-	9 millions	10½ millions
1811	-	-	-	10 millions	12 millions
1821	-	-	-	12 millions	14 millions
1831	-	-	-	14 millions	16 millions
1841	-	-	-	16 millions	18½ millions
1851	-	-	-	18 millions	21 millions
1861	-	-	-	20 millions	23 millions
1871	-	-	-	23 millions	26 millions
1881	-	-	-	26 millions	30 millions
1891	-	-	-	29 millions	33 millions
1901	-	-	-	33 millions	37 millions
1911	-	-	-	36 millions	41 millions
1921	-	-	-	38 millions	43 millions
1931	-	-	-	40 millions	45 millions
1941	(no census owing to the war)				



## QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Give reasons why the Industrial Revolution first appeared in Britain.
2. Summarize the changes in agriculture from 1700 to 1820. What were their results?
3. Describe the inventions in the textile industries 1700-1820.
4. Give reasons why (a) steam-power was the central development, (b) coal was the most essential raw material, of the Industrial Revolution.
5. What improvements took place in means of transport during the years 1700-1820?
6. What do you understand by *laissez-faire*? Discuss in class the advantages and disadvantages of such a policy.
7. Draw a graph to show the growth of the population of England and Wales from 1500 to 1931.



## PART III

### NATION-BUILDING (1815-1870)

#### INTRODUCTION

#### **The European Background (1815-1870)**

THE TREATY OF VIENNA (1815) remodelled the map of Europe and set the stage for the following century. Denmark, which had aided Napoleon, lost Norway to Sweden. The latter yielded Finland to Russia, which also obtained most of Poland. In Germany the Holy Roman Empire, abolished by Napoleon, was not restored; instead there was established a German Confederation of thirty-nine states, chief of which were Austria and Prussia. Austria obtained Lombardy and Venetia in return for giving up the former Austrian Netherlands, which were joined to Holland to form a new kingdom under the House of Orange. Prussia, which had played a large part in the final overthrow of Napoleon, obtained valuable territories in the Rhineland. In Italy the old order was re-established with little alteration. Austrian influence was supreme in Italy, as apart from her direct rule in Lombardy and Venetia, branches of the Hapsburgs ruled in the northern duchies, and the Pope and the King of Naples looked to Austria to protect their thrones. The Treaty of Vienna has been criticized for ignoring, in countries like Germany, Italy, Belgium and Poland, that desire for national unity and independence which the French Revolution had done much to stimulate.

From 1815 to 1822 the Great Powers held Congresses to regulate the affairs of Europe, but these Congresses were soon dominated by the reactionary outlook of the Austrian Chancellor, Metternich. The British Foreign Secretaries, Castlereagh and Canning, protested, and the Congress System came to an end. In 1830 the French overthrew the Bourbons and placed Louis Philippe (1830-1848) on the throne. Poles and Italians tried unsuccessfully to throw off the foreign yoke; but







the Belgians, with the help of Louis Philippe and the British minister, Lord Palmerston, succeeded in winning their independence from Holland.

In 1848 revolutions broke out on a larger scale. In France Louis Philippe was deposed and a Republic established under Louis Napoleon, nephew of the great emperor. By 1852 Louis Napoleon had changed his title to Emperor Napoleon III. Elsewhere in 1848 revolutions failed, and the national aspirations of Germans, Italians, and the many divisions of the Austrian 'ramshackle' Empire were, for the time being, dashed.

In 1852 Cavour, Prime Minister of Piedmont, began his work of unifying Italy. He secured the aid of Napoleon III in expelling the Austrians from Lombardy (1859), while the Italian soldier, Garibaldi, expelled the Bourbons from Naples. The new kingdom of Italy was proclaimed in 1861, though it did not obtain Venetia till 1866 and Rome till 1870.

These last Italian acquisitions arose out of Bismarck's wars on behalf of German unification. In 1864 he persuaded Austria to join in an attack on Denmark. Then in 1866 he turned on Austria, defeated her at Sadowa and expelled her from the German Confederation. The Franco-German War of 1870-1871 completed his work. France was defeated at Sedan and Napoleon III's empire collapsed. France had to yield Alsace-Lorraine to the new German Empire and withdraw from Italy her troops protecting the Papacy.

In Eastern Europe the Ottoman Empire began its painful process of breaking up. Russia hoped to profit from this break-up by extending her power towards Constantinople; but Britain and other countries opposed Russian designs. In 1821 the Greeks revolted against the Turks and after nearly ten years secured their independence. The Sultan then had to face revolts by his own Egyptian Viceroy, Mehemet Ali. These were quelled by the Great Powers, and finally in 1854-1856 Britain and France succeeded in the Crimean War in preventing any further disintegration of the Ottoman Empire—for the time being, at any rate.



## CHAPTER IX

### TORY REACTION AND REFORMS (1815-1830)

#### **Lord Liverpool's Government**

LORD LIVERPOOL's government, formed in 1812, witnessed the overthrow of Napoleon and continued throughout the post-war years till 1827. The Prime Minister himself was not of outstanding ability, but he was easy-going and able to manage different sorts of people. Till 1822 the leading figure in his ministry was Lord Castlereagh, a cold and distant aristocrat who held the position of Foreign Secretary. Castlereagh was widely blamed for the reactionary policy of these first ten years. In truth, although a reactionary, he was too much occupied with foreign affairs to attend much to conditions at home. The Home Secretary, Lord Sidmouth, who as Addington had been Prime Minister from 1801 to 1804, and the Lord Chancellor, Lord Eldon, were thoroughgoing diehards and were probably more to blame for the government's domestic policy. Reaction in fact was a legacy from the younger Pitt, who had set the fashion of exaggerating the dangers of Jacobinism and of opposing tooth-and-nail every concession to the people.

#### **Distress after the War**

The years 1815-1822 were years of much distress and discontent. The reasons for this are manifold, being bound up with the inevitable dislocations following the conclusion of twenty years of war, as well as with the general political, social, and economic condition of the country.

#### *Causes: (1) Effects of the Wars*

When peace came several hundred thousands of soldiers and sailors were hastily demobilized with no arrangements to find them a livelihood. A slump occurred when government orders for armaments, food, and clothing suddenly ceased. Trade was also disorganized by factors outside the government's control.



Europe was too impoverished to buy British goods, and some countries began to establish industries of their own. War conditions and the British navy had combined to give Britain almost a monopoly of certain distant markets before 1815; after 1815 we had to face the competition of other nations. Prices were high owing to the waste of war and to the paper currency which Pitt had made inconvertible in 1797 and which was now suffering from inflation. In 1819 a committee, under the chairmanship of a 'coming' politician named Robert Peel, recommended the resumption of cash payments, and by 1821 paper money was once more convertible. The cost of twenty years of war was not so easily settled. The National Debt had risen from £244,000,000 in 1793 to over £850,000,000 in 1815; interest had to be paid to the government's creditors (mainly the wealthy classes of the country itself), apart from any repayment of the principal, and this of course meant high taxation, which was so arranged as to press most heavily on the poorer classes.

*Causes: (2) Political and Social Condition of Britain*

In 1815 Britain consisted, in Disraeli's phrase, of "two nations." The one was small in numbers, rich in material possessions, and enjoying authority over its fellow-creatures. The other included the masses of the people who worked incessantly and for a miserable livelihood in mines, fields, and factories, and were subject to laws which they had no share in passing. A wide gulf separated the two sides, breeding misunderstanding and hatred.

Government was in the hands of the landed interests, and the growing industrial north and the working-classes were without political power. Local affairs were managed by small corporations in the towns and by the Justices of the Peace in the counties, for as yet there were no elected town or county councils. The monarchy too was discredited. During the last ten years of his reign (1810-1820) the old king, George III, was blind and subject to fits of madness, and the royal powers were exercised by the Prince of Wales. The Regent posed as 'the



first gentleman in Europe,' but his vanity and deceitfulness, his wicked life, and his sordid quarrels with his wife (if she really was his wife, for he had secretly married another lady before) disgraced the name of 'gentleman' and qualified him more for the title of 'first cad.' When the Regent became George IV in 1820 the nation was shocked by the new king's efforts to obtain a divorce and exclude his wife from the coronation. The unhappy lady solved the problem by conveniently dying.

Meanwhile the common people were suffering from the recent agricultural and industrial changes. In the countryside enclosures had robbed the people of their land and machinery had taken away their cottage spinning, while the Speenhamland System was depressing wages and pauperizing the labourer. In the towns and factories dirt, disease, bad housing, long hours, low wages, and the employment of women and children made conditions almost intolerable. To enforce the Anti-Combination Acts the government employed spies and *agents provocateurs*. Machinery was also displacing the old hand-workers or depressing the living of such as continued. Prominent among these were the hand-loom weavers who, numbering about half-a-million, struggled till 1850 against the superior power-looms and saw their wages sink to a penny an hour. The economists argued that machinery stimulated demand, and thus employment, by cheapening production; they overlooked the fact that such adaptation takes time and that the transition is bound to hit those who, without reserves of wealth, must live from day to day. In town and country 'Luddite' riots broke out against the new machines. The riots were so called after a half-wit, Ned Ludd, who led attacks against the Nottingham lace-machines in 1811. The government's methods with law-breakers were tiger-like in their ferocity. About two hundred offences were punishable by death; thousands of convicts were transported to Botany Bay for sheep-stealing; the starving peasant who poached was tried by his own local landlords and suffered exile or imprisonment under the severe Game Laws.



Men of England, wherefore plough  
 For the lords who lay you low?  
 Wherefore weave with toil and care  
 The rich robes your tyrants wear?

wrote the revolutionary poet, Shelley, and his words found an echo in many a humble breast.

*Causes: (3) Repressive Attitude of the Government*

The people's sufferings were not altogether the fault of the government, but under the prevailing notions of *laissez-faire* the government did nothing to check abuses and at times adopted a policy of repression and class legislation.

In 1815 it passed the famous Corn Law. Under the high prices during the war landlords had enjoyed big rents and much new land had been brought into cultivation. With the signing of peace and the restoration of normal trade, landlords and farmers feared the competition of foreign corn. To prevent this the Parliament of landowners excluded foreign corn unless the price of home corn had reached the high figure of eighty shillings a quarter. The general effect of this was to raise the price of bread. In 1816 the government yielded to the demands of the Whig opposition and repealed the income-tax. This tax had admittedly been imposed as a war-time measure, but with a large National Debt the war had still to be paid for, and the effect of the repeal was to relieve the rich at the expense of the poor. Numerous articles in everyday use were taxed instead, and these indirect taxes involved a much greater sacrifice for the poor than for the rich.

### **Reformers and Radicals**

After Waterloo the demand for reforms grew rapidly. Poets like Shelley and Byron demanded freedom for the human soul. Sir Samuel Romilly and Sir James Mackintosh urged reform of the penal code, while an extreme section of the Whig party, led by Lord Grey and Sir Francis Burdett, pressed for Parliamentary reform. Major Cartwright was busy founding Hampden Clubs for the same purpose, and 'Orator' Hunt was rousing popular enthusiasm at his mass meetings. The writings of



the lawyer, Jeremy Bentham, were slowly but surely influencing the minds of thinking men, like the steady dripping of water on stone. Bentham disbelieved in mere custom or tradition; his sole criterion in judging the laws and institutions of a country was their usefulness. Do they, he asked, promote "the greatest happiness of the greatest number"? If not, they must be swept away. Among his disciples was the Charing Cross tailor, Francis Place, who was working for the repeal of the laws against trade unions and who afterwards turned to the one overriding question of the time, Parliamentary reform. Place and other extremists were called 'Radicals' because they wished to tackle evils at their roots (Latin *radix*=root).

The greatest Radical of the age was William Cobbett (1762-1835). Born in Surrey, Cobbett remained till his death a lover of the old English countryside in which he had been brought up. He was self-taught and full of prejudices and ill-assorted ideas—of a type of mind the very reverse of Bentham's. But his heart was with the poor and oppressed, and his mastery of clear forthright prose and his habit of wholesale denunciation made him the greatest influence of his age over the working-classes. From 1802 till his death in 1835 he issued his weekly *Political Register*, widely read in home and inn at its original price of one shilling and one half-penny, and still more widely read when reduced to twopence. In it he pressed for Parliamentary reform and attacked all the things he hated: industrialism, parasitic towns (of which London, the 'Great Wen,' was the chief), the National Debt, high taxes for the benefit of stockholders and financiers, Parliamentary corruption, 'Parson' Malthus, and pink-nosed Liverpool. The *Register* was scoffed at by his opponents as 'Cobbett's Twopenny Trash.' In 1817 the government suspended the Habeas Corpus Act and Cobbett prudently escaped to America for two years. On his return he began his tours of the English countryside described in his *Rural Rides*. For three years after the Reform Act of 1832 Cobbett sat in Parliament for Oldham, but the qualities which had made him the people's tribune failed to move the trained or blissful minds of that august assembly.



### **Popular Protests: Peterloo and the Six Acts**

For five years after Waterloo a series of meetings and riots, rick-burning, and machine-breaking swept the country. In 1816 a meeting at Spa Fields outside London raided a gunsmith's shop and, but for government action, would have developed into a riot. In the following year stones were thrown at the Prince Regent's coach, and the government suspended the Habeas Corpus Act. Later a body of men set out to march from Manchester to London to lay their grievances before the government. These 'Blanketeers'—so-called from the blanket carried by each man for sleeping in—were dispersed by the authorities and reached no farther than Derbyshire.

In August, 1819, a huge meeting was arranged in St Peter's Fields, Manchester, to be addressed by 'Orator' Hunt. Over 50,000 people trooped in from Manchester and neighbouring towns, many in holiday garb intent on enjoying their day out. The special objects of the meeting were Parliamentary reform and the repeal of the Corn Laws, and banners were carried inscribed "Equal Representation or Death" and "No Corn Laws." The Manchester magistrates forbade the meeting and, before any speeches had been made or any disorders had occurred, ordered the yeomanry to disperse the crowd. Regular soldiers were then sent in, and in the ensuing scuffle eleven people were killed and over five hundred injured. Popular indignation ran high and the massacre was nicknamed 'Peterloo' in mockery of Waterloo. The government congratulated the magistrates on their action.

Peterloo was followed by the Six Acts (1819). Two which forbade military drilling and the possession of arms were wise precautions, but others interfered with cherished liberties. Large meetings and the freedom of the press were suppressed, justice was delayed, and a stamp duty was placed on cheap pamphlets. The latter was aimed particularly at Cobbett's writings.

It is not surprising that the more extreme elements resorted to violence. In 1820 Thistlewood and others hatched the Cato



Street Conspiracy to murder the whole cabinet at dinner. A spy revealed the plot and the leaders were executed. The government during these years observed its first duty, to keep order; but it neglected to remedy the causes of the prevailing discontent.

### **Lord Castlereagh and Foreign Affairs**

Lord Castlereagh, Foreign Secretary from 1812 to 1822, was the most important man in the government. Born in Ireland in 1769, he had served his political apprenticeship as Chief Secretary of that unhappy country, and had been active in promoting the Act of Union (1800). Later as Secretary at War he reorganized the army and with Canning planned the opening stages of the Peninsular War. As Foreign Secretary after 1812 Castlereagh organized the Fourth Coalition which overthrew Napoleon, and afterwards represented Britain at the Congress of Vienna, where he wisely urged leniency towards defeated France.

In 1818 Castlereagh by peaceful negotiations settled outstanding boundary questions with the U.S.A. The rival navies were withdrawn from the Great Lakes, and the forty-ninth parallel of latitude was fixed as the boundary from the lakes to the Rockies. No fortifications were to be erected, and none has ever since been found necessary.

Castlereagh's chief concern, however, was with Europe. The British minister was distinctly 'European' in outlook and supported the periodic congresses held to settle outstanding questions. This led his enemies to regard him as hand-in-glove with the Continental despots—but they were wrong. Castlereagh was indeed no liberal, but from the first he refused to identify Britain with the blind reaction of Metternich and the Tsar. The latter's Holy Alliance (a league of rulers to govern according to Christian principles) he dubbed "a piece of sublime mysticism and nonsense" and he advised the Regent not to support it. He approved of the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, 1818 (which withdrew the allied army of occupation from France), but he opposed the Congress of Troppau, 1820,



and bluntly denounced the Troppau Protocol which proclaimed the right of intervention in the affairs of other countries. The inevitable development of his policy was the complete dissociation of Britain from the Congress System, but before this occurred he died by his own hand (1822). The London mob callously cheered his funeral procession.

### **New Blood**

After Castlereagh's death Liverpool's ministry was reorganized. Canning succeeded his rival at the Foreign Office, Peel became Home Secretary, and Huskisson went to the Board of Trade. These three ministers made the remaining five years of Liverpool's ministry (1822-1827) more enlightened, and a policy of moderate reform was begun.

### **Canning's Foreign Policy**

Canning's policy towards the Continental despots was an acceleration of his predecessor's. In 1822 the Congress of Verona sanctioned the invasion of Spain by French troops to put down a rising and restore the Spanish king. Canning protested against this interference in the internal affairs of another country—an interference which threatened also to extend the power of France. He was unable to prevent it, but retaliated by withdrawing definitely from the Congress System and taking his revenge over the American question.

The Spanish colonies in Central and South America had revolted from their mother-country during the Napoleonic Wars. After the wars they refused to return to their old allegiance. When the Holy Alliance considered the dispatch of an expeditionary force, Canning protested. It was more interference with the liberty of other nations, it again threatened an extension of French power, and (what weighed most of all with many of Canning's Tory colleagues) it would injure British trade with South America, which had increased considerably with the ending of the Spanish colonial restrictions. Canning made it clear that the British fleet would prevent the dispatch of an expedition across the Atlantic and in 1824 he



recognized the new republics. "I resolved," he said, "that if France had Spain, it should not be Spain with the Indies. I called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the old." George IV excused himself from reading the royal speech recognizing the rebel republics on the plea that he had mislaid his false teeth. In December, 1823, President Monroe had acted similarly to Canning by issuing the famous Doctrine announcing the opposition of the U.S.A. to European interference anywhere in the Americas. Canning also helped Brazil to assert its independence from Portugal. In Portugal, too, Canning supported the Constitutional party against a reactionary rising by sending a fleet to the River Tagus.

English volunteers (including Byron, who lost his life at Missolonghi) helped the Greeks in the revolt against Turkey in 1821. But Canning was concerned to prevent Russia from profiting from the struggle. Hence he tried to limit the revolt and prevent Russia from acting alone. But events moved somewhat outside his control. The Sultan obtained an army and a fleet from his Egyptian vassal, Mehemet Ali, and the Greeks were pitilessly massacred. Russia sent an ultimatum to Turkey, and Britain and France dispatched a fleet to Greek waters. For a few months in 1827 Canning was Prime Minister, and Britain, France, and Russia declared for the independence of Greece. Canning died in August, 1827. Two months later, as a result of a threatening movement on the part of the Turks, Admiral Codrington, commanding a joint British, French, and Russian fleet, sank the Turkish fleet at Navarino. Wellington called this somewhat accidental battle an "untoward event," but it helped to secure the independence of Greece which the Sultan was eventually forced to recognize (1829).

### **Peel at the Home Office (1822-1827)**

Robert Peel (1788-1850) was the son of a wealthy Lancashire cotton manufacturer. After an education at Harrow and Christ Church, Oxford, the young Robert entered politics. His first post was in Ireland where he organized a police force that foreshadowed the London 'bobbies.' In 1819 he was chairman of



the committee that recommended the resumption of cash payments by the Bank of England. Peel was in line with the old-fashioned Tories in his opposition to Parliamentary reform and even to Catholic Emancipation, which latter Canning and others were ready to support. But he represented the new industrial element in politics, and as Home Secretary he carried through important reforms.

He abolished the evil practice of sending spies among the working-classes and humanized the penal system. This had for long been based on the notion that the best way of stamping out crime was to punish offenders as harshly as possible. No attempt was made to educate them out of their evil ways. The prisons were filthy and degrading, and there were over two hundred capital offences, many quite trivial, such as impersonating a Chelsea pensioner. This system defeated its own ends. Petty offenders indulged in violence to evade capture, while juries were often unwilling to find accused persons guilty and thus send them to the gallows. At the end of the eighteenth century John Howard laboured to reform prison life, and was followed by the Quaker, Elizabeth Fry. Romilly and Mackintosh had for long exposed the cruelties and anomalies of the penal code, and now Peel gave official support to the movement. He systematized many of the laws by reducing their number and doing away with inconsistencies, and he abolished the death-penalty for more than a hundred minor offences. In this way he strove to "make the punishment fit the crime."

### **Huskisson at the Board of Trade**

Meanwhile William Huskisson, M.P. for Liverpool, was doing valuable work at the Board of Trade with the co-operation of 'Prosperity' Robinson, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and with the support of Canning. Huskisson resumed the task, abandoned since the days of Adam Smith and the younger Pitt, of revising the nation's tariff in the direction of free trade.

He reduced many duties on raw materials, *e.g.*, wool, and set an upper limit of thirty per cent. for taxes on manufactured goods. Colonial goods were often given tariff preferences.



Thus Canadian wheat and timber, Indian silks, and Australian wool were taxed at lower rates than the same articles from outside the empire. The Navigation Laws were considerably modified, particularly towards those countries which made reciprocal concessions. Direct trade between our colonies and foreign countries was also allowed in place of the old insistence on certain colonial goods being sent first to Britain. Not till 1849, however, were the Navigation Laws completely repealed. With the Corn Law of 1815 Huskisson achieved less in face of the opposition of the landed interests. He carried a few minor modifications, but was unable to pass his main reform, the introduction of a sliding scale whereby, starting high when the price was low, the duty was to fall gradually as the price rose. It was left to Wellington (1828) to introduce a sliding scale with Huskisson's scale of duties altered and spoilt. In 1824-1825 the Anti-Combination Acts were repealed, though this was not so much a government measure as a result of the agitation carried out by Francis Place (see *pp.* 141, 283).

Huskisson was one of our greatest finance and trade ministers. In 1830 his life was tragically ended by an accident at the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway.

### **Wellington's Ministry (1828-1830): Catholic Emancipation**

In 1827 Lord Liverpool was succeeded by Canning, whose death a few months later produced another short Tory ministry. Then in 1828 the Duke of Wellington became Prime Minister. Peel, whose opposition to Catholic Emancipation had led him to refuse office in the two short 'Canningite' ministries, now returned to the Home Office. He was also leader of the Commons and the Duke's right-hand man.

Wellington (1769-1852) was largely an untried man in politics. Since representing England at Vienna in 1815 he had fulfilled various diplomatic and political duties. He belonged to the extreme Tories, regarding any change as akin to that Jacobinism which he had spent his life in fighting. He opposed Catholic Emancipation and the slightest tinkering with the old



Parliamentary system, and his extreme views soon led the more enlightened Canningites (Huskisson, Melbourne, and Palmerston) to resign. The two latter soon passed over to the Whigs.

In 1828 the young Whig leader, Lord John Russell, introduced a bill repealing the Test and Corporation Acts. These measures, dating from Charles II's reign, prohibited Nonconformists from holding office under the state or in a municipality. They had been evaded for a century by the passing of annual Indemnity Acts freeing Nonconformists from any punishments they had incurred. But this was an undignified proceeding, and the two acts were now repealed.

In 1829 Peel organized the Metropolitan Police Force to replace the old unsatisfactory watchmen. The new force was made into a career for young men, and being unarmed could not commit any 'Peterloos.' These 'bobbies' or 'peelers' were at first ridiculed, but they soon proved their worth, and Peel's example was in time followed throughout the rest of the country.

In the same year the question of Catholic Emancipation came to a head. Catholics in England and Ireland were still excluded from many offices, including that of Member of Parliament. Since the Act of Union and Pitt's broken promises Ireland had regarded herself as betrayed and had remained discontented. Soon she was spellbound by the oratory of an Irish Catholic lawyer, Daniel O'Connell, who, although opposed to violence, was determined to use every lawful device possible to gain his ends. He formed a Catholic Association, collected a Catholic rent from the peasantry to obtain funds, addressed monster meetings, and used the Catholic priesthood to win the support of the peasantry. In 1828 a by-election occurred at County Clare in western Ireland. The government candidate was a popular figure, but O'Connell stood against him and obtained an overwhelming majority. This created a difficult situation. O'Connell had been elected, but as a Catholic could not sit in Parliament. The Duke, on being informed that Ireland was on the verge of civil war, sounded the retreat like a prudent general. Catholic Emancipation was granted (1829) by opening



all official posts to Catholics except those of Sovereign, Regent, Lord Chancellor, and Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. By a policy of pinpricks the government made O'Connell go through another election and also raised the voting qualification for Irish Catholics. O'Connell spent the rest of his life fighting, vainly, for the remission of tithes paid by the Irish peasants to the Protestant Church, and for the repeal of the Act of Union.

Peel had stood by his Prime Minister despite his own disbelief in Emancipation. We can admire his loyalty but hardly his political wisdom; he had allowed himself to be caught in the same cleft stick as his master and had advised yielding as the only way out. In 1830 George IV died and was succeeded by his more popular sailor brother, William IV. Parliamentary reform was in the air, and the news of the 1830 revolutions in France and Belgium stimulated its demand. An election was held, and in the new Parliament Wellington declared the British constitution perfect. He was soon defeated. The Whigs took over, and the long period of Tory rule, lasting almost without interruption from 1770, was ended.

### QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Summarize the causes of distress and discontent from 1815 to 1822. How far was the government to blame?
2. Write notes on: Jeremy Bentham, Francis Place, William Cobbett, Peterloo, the Six Acts.
3. Give an account of the foreign policies of Castlereagh and Canning.
4. Describe in outline the domestic reforms of the Tories (1822-1830).
5. What do you understand by Catholic Emancipation? Describe the events leading to its being granted, and consider the rights and wrongs of Wellington's retreat.



## CHAPTER X

### WHIG REFORMS AND DECLINE (1830-1841)

#### **Earl Grey's Government (1830-1834)**

IN 1830 the veteran Whig leader, Earl Grey, succeeded Wellington as Prime Minister. Among his appointments were the two Canningites, Lord Melbourne and Lord Palmerston, to the Home Office and the Foreign Office respectively. The young Whig, Lord John Russell, was made Paymaster-General and soon became the government's leading spokesman in the Commons—for his title of 'Lord' was a courtesy title only. Another young Whig, Lord Durham, held office as Lord Privy Seal. The most pressing question was the reform of Parliament.

#### **The Old Parliamentary System**

Apart from certain religious disabilities, such as the exclusion of Jews and atheists from Parliament, there were three matters in need of urgent reform: the distribution of voting-power, the distribution of seats, and the corruption that still marred the election of candidates.

The franchise, or the power to vote at elections, was very restricted, and was confined to men. In the counties it was limited to those possessing freehold land worth forty shillings a year—a high qualification which had not been altered for four centuries. In the boroughs all sorts of qualifications, varying with the history of each borough, gave the vote. In some only the few members of the corporation could vote; in others the owners of particular pieces of land; in others those who paid rates and taxes; and in others the so-called 'potwallopers' or owners of hearths. In the nomination boroughs the landowner had the sole right of nominating the member. Most boroughs were controlled by a few wealthy persons, mainly landowners; where this was particularly noticeable they were known as 'pocket' boroughs. A few boroughs such as Preston and Westminster were democratic.



The distribution of seats was most unfair. The House of Commons contained 658 members, of whom 513 were from England and Wales, 100 from Ireland, and 45 from Scotland. Apart from a small and recent exception in the case of Yorkshire, every English county, no matter what its population, returned two members—a relic of the medieval practice of returning two knights from every shire. The main bulk of the members (419 out of the 513 from England and Wales) were elected by the boroughs. These Parliamentary boroughs dated mostly from the Middle Ages, but the Tudors had created many on the royal estates in Cornwall; they had not been added to since the reign of James I. The results were absurd. The south was over-represented compared with the growing industrial north. Cornwall returned as many members as Scotland, although its population was only one-eighth that of Scotland. Many Parliamentary boroughs had lost whatever importance they had once possessed. Old Sarum (near Salisbury) was an uninhabited mound; Dunwich, once in Suffolk, was under the North Sea; Downton, in Wiltshire, was in the middle of a stream. Yet these 'rotten' boroughs, or rather their owners, continued to send two members each to Parliament. Meanwhile other towns had grown enormously, especially with the Industrial Revolution, and were quite unrepresented, except in so far as they contained forty-shilling freeholders who could exercise the county vote—and this they did not. Among such towns were Manchester, Leeds, and Birmingham.

Such a system inevitably bred corruption. Candidates spoke from the hustings or platform, and the voters denoted their choice openly. The absence of the secret vote by ballot encouraged bribery, influence, or intimidation. Nor were election-expenses limited as nowadays, and huge sums were spent in buying votes. The boroughs were the worst offenders, and Dickens in his *Pickwick Papers* has caricatured the corruption of an old-time election in the imaginary borough of Eatanswill.

Defenders of the system maintained that its very variety enabled every interest to be represented, and they pointed out



that the old system had produced men of genius, such as the elder Pitt who had sat for Old Sarum. But after 1815 the demand for reform increased. To Whigs like Grey and Russell, and radicals like Cobbett and Hunt, were now added the manufacturing and commercial classes whose numbers had increased during the Industrial Revolution and who were determined to end the monopoly of political power long enjoyed by the landowners.

### **The Reform Struggle**

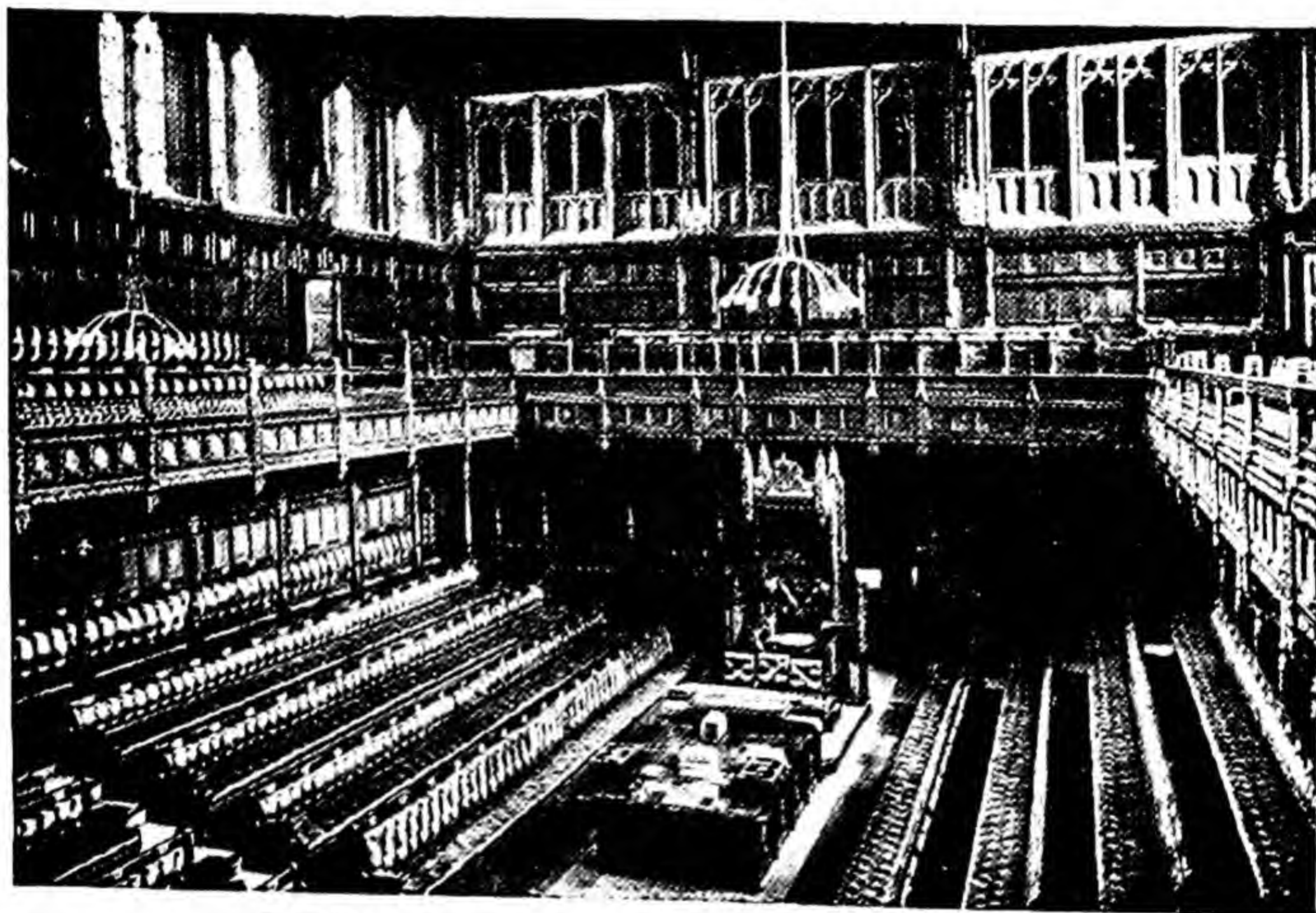
In March, 1831, Lord John Russell introduced the first Reform Bill. Its proposals of disfranchising the worst of the rotten and the nomination boroughs, redistributing their seats, and extending and making uniform the franchise were greeted with derision by the upholders of the old system. By April the Commons had rejected the bill and Earl Grey appealed to the country. The ensuing election was one of the wildest in our history, even the vested interests in the rotten boroughs being intimidated by mob enthusiasm. "The bill, the whole bill, and nothing but the bill" was the popular cry. The Whigs were returned with a large majority and forthwith introduced a second bill. This passed the Commons but was rejected by the Lords (October). Riots occurred at Bristol and Nottingham, and reforming societies began to drill their members. In December a third bill was introduced, which by the following March (1832) had once more passed the Commons. The Lords shrank from a second rejection but introduced wrecking amendments. Lord Grey then requested the King to create a sufficient number of new peers to pass the bill, and, when met with refusal, resigned. Wellington's efforts to form an alternative government made him the most unpopular man in England. The mob stoned his windows, and, to create a financial panic and increase the government's difficulties, Francis Place issued placards: "To stop the Duke, go for gold." Wellington confessed his failure, and Lord Grey returned to office with the royal promise of creating the necessary peers. The promise alone was sufficient. Wellington and about one hundred peers



abstained from voting, and in June, 1832, after a struggle of fifteen months, the Reform Bill became law.

### **The Reform Act (1832)**

In the boroughs a uniform voting-qualification was created, the vote being given to all householders paying £10 or more a year in rent. In the counties the forty-shilling freeholders



THE INTERIOR OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

The seat of the Speaker, or Chairman, is shown in the centre of the picture. On his right hand sit the Prime Minister's supporters; on his left the Opposition members. The Prime Minister himself and those members of the Cabinet who are also members of the House of Commons, sit on the front bench, on the Speaker's immediate right. The above picture shows the new House of Commons built after the destruction by fire of the old Houses of Parliament in 1834. The present buildings themselves suffered air-raid damage in 1941.

were reinforced by long-lease-holders paying £10 a year in rent and short-lease-holders paying £50.

Fifty-five boroughs with less than 2,000 inhabitants lost both their members, thirty boroughs of between 2,000 and 4,000 inhabitants lost one member each. This, with other small changes, gave 143 seats for redistribution. Of these 65 were given to the English and Welsh counties, 8 to Scotland, 5 to Ireland, and the remaining 65 to new boroughs, of which



many (like Manchester and Birmingham) received 2 members each.

What the act meant in practice was that the borough vote was now in the hands of the upper middle classes—industrialists and the better-off shopkeepers and professional men. In the counties the wealthy tenant-farmers were added to the old freeholders, and there the landed interest still reigned supreme. The number of voters was only increased from 435,000 to 655,000. For long the act made little difference to the composition of the Commons, which remained a predominantly aristocratic body, while corruption and intimidation continued to influence elections. The working-classes, who had taken a prominent part in the agitation, were bitterly disappointed; in a few democratic boroughs the new qualification actually disfranchised certain voters. None the less, a breach had been made in the stronghold of the landed aristocracy. The middle classes and the industrial interests had secured admission; while the working-classes, disregarding all attempts to close the breach, were soon launching fresh attacks. Not till 1867 did the middle classes heed their clamour and open the gates.

### **More Whig Reforms**

Another election was held and the Whigs were again returned with a majority. Lord Grey continued as Prime Minister till 1834, when he was succeeded by Lord Melbourne. Melbourne remained in office till 1841, except for a short interval from the end of 1834 to the beginning of 1835, when Peel held office.

The spirit of reform was in the air and for the next three years infected the Whigs. Broadly speaking it blew from two quarters. One was the utilitarianism of Jeremy Bentham, who died in 1832. Every law and institution, he argued, should be submitted to the test of its utility, and since everyone knew what was best for himself the government should interfere as little as possible. Where, however, it did interfere, it should do so with the maximum amount of efficiency and centralization (to override local custom and slackness) and should seek the



support of the people. In other words, *laissez-faire*, efficiency, and democracy were the foundations of good government. Secondly there was the influence of humanitarianism. This—a legacy of the Methodist revival—was the driving force of a small but influential group inside the Church of England and known as Evangelicals.

### Reforms of 1833

Wilberforce, Clarkson, and others of the 'Clapham Sect' had followed up the abolition of the slave-trade in 1807 with an agitation for the emancipation of the existing slaves. In 1833, as Wilberforce's life neared its end, their efforts were rewarded. Parliament abolished slavery throughout the Empire and voted £20,000,000 compensation to the slave-owners in the British West Indies and South Africa. The owners complained that the sum was inadequate, and in South Africa the Dutch Boer farmers trekked from Cape Colony to Natal, and thence to found independent republics in Transvaal and the Orange Free State.

After the black slaves abroad came the little white slaves at home. Thousands of young children were being stunted in mind, soul, and body by the indescribably harsh conditions under which they worked in factories and mines. Robert Owen, John Fielden, Richard Oastler, and others pressed for reforms, but the few acts that had been passed merely touched the fringe of the problem and in any case were not enforced. The most striking reformer was Lord Ashley (better known as the Earl of Shaftesbury), whose efforts bore fruit in the Factory Act of 1833. Employment of children under nine in textile mills was forbidden. From nine to thirteen a maximum working-day of nine hours was allowed, and some time was to be allotted to education. Young persons from thirteen to eighteen could not work more than twelve hours a day. Four full-time inspectors were appointed to enforce the act. The new law marked the beginning of part-time education and, most important of all, of the system of enforcement through central inspectors.

In the same year the government took its first step, albeit a



small one, towards assuming responsibility for the nation's education. A Quaker named Lancaster had founded the Non-conformist British and Foreign School Society, and the Church of England had followed suit by establishing, through Dr Bell, its National Society. These two bodies had their own schools throughout the country but found their voluntary subscriptions and endowments insufficient for their needs, despite the salaries saved by the monitorial system of teaching. The government now came to their rescue by making an annual grant of £20,000 out of public money. In course of time the grants grew, but it was not till 1870 that the nation decided to have schools of its own (see Chapter XX).

### **The Poor Law Amendment Act (1834)**

The system of supplementing wages out of rates according to the price of bread and the size of the family had originated in Speenhamland, Berkshire (1795) and had spread to other counties, especially in the south. It produced disastrous results. Farmers offered low wages and labourers accepted them, knowing the overseers would grant extra relief. The labourer of independent mind, finding himself undercut by the pauper, swallowed his pride and became a pauper himself. Thus the whole labouring-class was being demoralized. Rates rose so high that in one place it is said the landowners were willing to give their land away, but found no one to accept it! These and other evils were exposed by a government commission, on the recommendation of which the Poor Law Amendment Act was passed. Its guiding principle was that of 'less eligibility,' *i.e.*, the condition of the able-bodied pauper should be less eligible or desirable than that of the lowest-paid independent worker, and it was inspired by the Benthamite doctrines of efficiency and centralization.

The act reimposed the workhouse test by making all outdoor relief illegal. Conditions in the workhouses were made harsh to deter any but the most destitute from applying for relief. Groups of parishes were to form unions to provide a common workhouse. The duties of the old overseers were transferred to



elected Boards of Guardians, and finally three central Poor Law Commissioners were appointed to enforce the law throughout the country.

The act provoked a storm of opposition. People refused to enter the workhouses or 'Bastilles' as they called them. Charles Dickens in *Oliver Twist* exposed the inhumanity of the new law, while Radicals and Tories joined hands in denouncing the Whigs. The Commissioners, with their energetic Benthamite secretary, Edwin Chadwick, succeeded in enforcing the law in the south, but failed in the north, where the strong opposition soon merged into the Chartist movement. Although the act contained many sound and sensible provisions, it was in truth applied too harshly and suddenly to a generation that had grown up under the lax Speenhamland system.

### **Peel's 'Hundred Days' (December, 1834-April, 1835)**

Lord Melbourne had succeeded Grey in 1834 but at the end of the year was displaced by Sir Robert Peel, whose short first ministry is sometimes called his 'Hundred Days.' Peel lacked a majority in the Commons and appealed to the country. To his own constituents at Tamworth he issued his famous election manifesto. Herein he accepted the Reform Act of 1832, which he had at the time opposed, as a "final and irrevocable settlement of a great constitutional question." He also promised reforms of other institutions where necessary, but stressed the need for caution. Soon after the election Peel was defeated by an alliance between the Whigs and O'Connell's Irish members. Melbourne returned to office, and Peel spent the next six years building up the Conservative party from the old Tory party on the basis of his Tamworth Manifesto.

### **Municipal Corporations Act (1835)**

Town government was as unsatisfactory as the Parliamentary system before 1832. In the old towns with charters dating from the Middle Ages the government was usually controlled by small bodies of wealthy men who recruited their numbers from among their friends or relatives. Accounts were not audited



and much public money was spent on dining and wining. In Coventry two schoolmasters were paid £700 to manage a school with only one pupil. New towns, like Manchester and Birmingham, had no real municipal government and were controlled by a lord of the manor. Their affairs were managed (or often mismanaged or neglected) by a mixture of medieval and makeshift authorities. In some towns bodies of commissioners had taken over such necessary tasks as street lighting, paving, or sewage, but there was little co-ordination between them.

The Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 extended to the towns the principles that had been applied to Parliament in 1832. Town councils were to be elected by the whole body of ratepayers, and there was provision for the election of aldermen and mayors. The new councils possessed wide powers and could levy rates. Their accounts were to be audited. In the next few years many towns were incorporated, as for instance Manchester in 1838. The new councils proved successful and have gradually developed into the modern town councils whose powers far exceed those of a century ago.

### **Whig Decline (1835-1841)**

The Whigs continued in power for the next six years, but their reforming energies were spent. Lord Melbourne was a cynical and contented aristocrat and his followers intrigued and quarrelled. Moreover, the Whigs were hampered by the Irish members upon whose support the government's existence depended. O'Connell led this small but troublesome group, nicknamed his 'Tail,' and pressed the Whigs to lighten the burden of tithes that the Irish Catholic peasantry was forced to pay to support the Irish Protestant Church. The Whigs spent much time seeking a solution, but vested interests and Protestant prejudices were too strong and they never succeeded. Irish opinion turned increasingly towards the complete severance of the Union with England.

In 1837 William IV was succeeded by his niece, Victoria, a girl of eighteen. Under a different law of succession Hanover passed to the nearest *male* relative. The Prime Minister ren-



dered good service to the nation and the monarchy (for the latter institution was at this time very low in popular estimation) by training the Queen in her duties. He soon became her "dear Lord Melbourne, so good and kind." In 1840 Victoria married her serious-minded cousin, Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg, whose stiff foreign ways for long estranged him, unfortunately, from the nation.

In 1839 Lord Durham, sent out by the government to investigate unrest in Canada, presented his famous Report. In 1840 the penny post was introduced through the efforts of Rowland Hill; postage was to be prepaid by means of stamps and a flat rate of a penny was charged no matter what the distance of delivery. But these signs of life were the mere bubbles of a drowning man, for the government was fast becoming engulfed in a sea of financial troubles. Meanwhile Peel was building up the new Conservative Party. In 1839 he all but became Prime Minister, but the Queen refused to change her ladies-in-waiting at his request. This 'bedchamber question' merely delayed the course of events for two years, for in 1841 Peel succeeded Melbourne with a clear majority.

### **The People's Charter (1838)**

The closing years of Melbourne's ministry saw the rise of the Chartist movement. The working-classes had played a considerable part in the agitation of 1830-1832 and were bitterly disappointed when they were not given the vote. When some years later Lord John Russell declared the Reform Act of 1832 a final settlement, he was nicknamed 'Finality Jack,' and the working-classes knew they had nothing to expect from the Whigs—or, of course, from the Tories. But the Chartist movement was fed from many sources. The northern opposition to the Poor Law of 1834, the factory-reform crusade of Richard Oastler in Yorkshire, the repeated attempts of the working-classes to organize trade unions, all were soon feeding the main stream of Chartist agitation. Economic distress among the submerged or neglected elements of the working-classes—the miserably paid hand-loom weavers of Yorkshire and Lanca-



shire, the stockingers of Leicestershire, and the outcast miners of South Wales and the Black Country—made these the rank and file of the movement, and it is noteworthy that the agitation flared up and died down according as economic conditions were bad or good. It was this that made the 'hungry forties' (the opening years of that decade) the peak period of the Chartist agitation.

The People's Charter was drawn up in 1838 by William Lovett, the President of the Cabinetmakers' Union. It was in the form of a bill to be presented to Parliament to be made law. Lovett was acting for the London Working Men's Association, but the Charter soon became the rallying-cry of radical and reformist societies throughout the country.

The Charter demanded six points: manhood suffrage, vote by ballot, annual parliaments, payment of M.P.'s, equal electoral districts, and the abolition of the property qualification for M.P.'s. By these means it was hoped that the working-classes, the overwhelming majority of the nation, would obtain control of Parliament and be able to amend the laws that pressed heavily upon them. To attempt to alter laws, like the Corn Laws, without first controlling Parliament was, they argued, a foolish waste of time.

Lovett soon found himself in very mixed company. Thomas Attwood of Birmingham tried to link Chartism with his agitation for a 'managed' currency, regulated to suit the economic needs of the country. Thomas Cooper of Leicester organized his disciples along lines suggestive of the later Salvation Army and called himself 'General.' Julian Harney was a red-hot revolutionary, while Bronterre O'Brien studied the French Revolutionaries of 1789 to give the movement a philosophical basis. The most popular leader of all was Feargus O'Connor. Muddle-headed in his ideas, he none the less won the affection of the masses by his demagoguery and Irish 'blarney.' His newspaper, the *Northern Star*, was the most widely read organ of the movement, and through it O'Connor tried to divert Chartism into a scheme for small-scale farming. The sober-minded Lovett, with his realization of the workers' own shortcomings,



viewed with dismay the growing power of the irresponsible O'Connor. Monster meetings and torchlight processions were held by the rank and file to press their demands.

### **Chartist Conventions and Failure**

In 1839 Chartists from all over the country attended a Convention in London and later one in Birmingham. The delegates styled themselves M.C.'s in imitation of the M.P.'s at Westminster. A petition in favour of the Charter was presented to Parliament, but was rejected by a huge majority. The Chartists were then divided over their next step. Some favoured 'moral force' or methods of peaceful propaganda, others favoured a general strike, while the extremists advocated 'physical force' or a violent revolution. In the end nothing was done. In the same year the South Wales miners rose under John Frost to capture Newport, and were suppressed by the authorities.

In 1842 distress led to another Convention; a petition to Parliament met with a similar fate to the first. Thereafter the movement somewhat died down, but in 1848, the year of revolutions, it flared up again. A big meeting on Kennington Common was advertised to march on Parliament. The government enrolled special constables (including Louis Napoleon, soon to be ruler of France) and placed the defences of London under the Duke of Wellington. A rainy day damped the Chartists' ardour and the government allowed Feargus O'Connor to bring the petition to Westminster in three cabs. The alleged 5,000,000 or more signatures amounted to less than 2,000,000 and many of these were obvious fakes, such as Victoria Rex, Mr Punch, No Cheese, and the Duke of Wellington (seventeen times). The petition met with its usual fate.

Chartism was ended as an active force, but despite its failure it had been worth while. It had educated the nation in the need for further reform and most of the six points have since been granted. Moreover, it had given the workers their first training in political organization. Its failure is easily explained. Its leaders had disagreed over the use of physical or moral force,



and over what to do when the vote was obtained. The government had suppressed disorders firmly but without stirring up any 'Peterloos.' The middle classes and the more prosperous trade unionists had held aloof, bestowing their support upon the more respectable Anti-Corn-Law Movement. Furthermore, the 'hungry forties' disappeared under Peel's wise government, and as the Poor Law lost much of its original severity, the rank and file grew lukewarm over what had once seemed a matter of life and death. Such is the common fate of movements and agitations.

### QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. What were the defects of the old Parliamentary system? How far did the Reform Act of 1832 remedy them?
2. Read *Pickwick Papers*, Chapter XIII, for Dickens' caricature of an old-time election.
3. Summarize the Whig reforms of 1833 to 1841.
4. Describe the causes of Chartism and account for its failure.
5. Explain clearly why you think the Chartists desired each of the Six Points. Which one has never been granted? Why?
6. Write notes on: William Wilberforce, Tamworth Manifesto, O'Connell's 'Tail,' Lord Shaftesbury, William Lovett, Feargus O'Connor.



## CHAPTER XI

### PEEL AND AFTER: DOMESTIC AFFAIRS (1841-1865)

#### **Peel's Ministry (1841-1846)**

THE new ministry was one of the strongest of the century. It contained, besides Peel himself, five past or future Prime Ministers: the aged Duke of Wellington; Lord Aberdeen; Lord Stanley, Lord Derby's heir; the Earl of Ripon; and a rising politician thirty-two years old, William Ewart Gladstone. Another young politician who was just making his mark in Parliament, Benjamin Disraeli, was omitted—much to his chagrin. Peel's industry and intellectual ability enabled him to supervise closely every activity of his subordinates and keep them together as a team. But his austere and reserved manner prevented him from winning the affection of many of his followers. "His smile," said O'Connell, "was like the silver plate on a coffin."

#### **Peel's Free Trade Budgets**

Peel's immediate tasks were to balance the budget and abolish the 'hungry forties.' The Whigs had brought the national finances to the verge of bankruptcy, and Peel had pictured their Chancellor of the Exchequer as "seated on an empty chair, by the pool of bottomless deficiency, fishing for a budget." Agricultural wages were about nine shillings a week, those of skilled craftsmen about fifteen shillings to one pound; but these sums were often never earned owing to widespread unemployment. Hundreds of taxes upon articles in everyday use made the cost of living high; they also injured trade and yielded a decreasing return. The masses turned to Chartism for a remedy.

Peel aimed at reviving trade and industry by reducing taxation. His first Free Trade budget in 1842 classified our imports under three heads: raw materials, semi-manufactured goods,



and fully manufactured goods. Many taxes were repealed outright, but where this was not done maximum rates of 5 per cent., 12 per cent., and 20 per cent. respectively were fixed. Many export duties on manufactured goods were repealed. To make up for the immediate loss in revenue the income tax, which had been repealed in 1816, was re-introduced for a period of three years; the rate was sevenpence in the pound on incomes over £150.

Subsequent budgets worked along the same lines. Outstanding was that of 1845 which repealed practically all export duties and numerous import duties, and continued the income tax which was due to lapse. It has been increasingly with us ever since.

In five years Peel remitted taxation to the extent of over £8,000,000. The cost of living was thus reduced and trade and industry revived. Such taxes as were left produced a far greater yield than before, and this together with income tax converted the budget deficit into a surplus.

### **Mines, Factories, and Railways**

In 1842 the efforts of Lord Ashley (Shaftesbury) secured the passage of an important Coal Mines Act. In many mines women were employed to draw the truckloads of coal from the coal-face, and children opened and closed the trap-doors that regulated the ventilation. The new act forbade the employment of women and of children under ten, and was strictly enforced by inspectors. In 1844 a Factory Act tightened previous regulations about hours, meal-times, and of fencing machinery, and extended the 12-hour day to women.

The forties witnessed a tremendous expansion of our railway system, and, despite the *laissez-faire* doctrines still widely held, the government stepped in to protect the public from the worst abuses of monopoly. In 1844 Gladstone, as President of the Board of Trade, obtained a Cheap Trains or Railways Act which provided that over every track at least one train a day was to run at a third-class fare of a penny a mile.



### **The Bank Charter Act (1844)**

In 1844 Peel converted £250,000,000 of the National Debt to a lower rate of interest and thus saved the country over £1,000,000 a year on debt charges. In the same year he regulated our banking-system along lines that lasted intact till the Great War and have continued in part since.

The number of separately controlled banks was far greater a century ago than at the present day. Small private banks and larger joint-stock banks existed both in the provinces and in London, while the latter contained the head offices of the most powerful of all joint-stock banks, the Bank of England. Except for the fact that the London joint-stock banks (not counting the Bank of England) could not issue notes, there was nothing in law to prevent the over-issue of such notes. With the development of trade and industry and the growing importance of London as the world's financial centre some regulation was needed if financial panics were to be avoided. Peel's Bank Charter Act of 1844 dealt with this problem. The Bank of England was divided into two departments, an Issue Department responsible for issuing notes, and a Banking Department for other activities. The Issue Department was allowed a fiduciary issue (*i.e.*, without gold or silver backing) of £14,000,000; above that every note had to be backed by precious metals. Country banks already issuing notes were limited to their previous figure, a matter of some £8,000,000 in all, and if for any reason any of them ceased to issue notes two-thirds of their amount went to increase the fiduciary issue of the Bank of England. By this means the note-issue was closely regulated and in time concentrated entirely (as far as England and Wales were concerned) in the Bank of England. Financial crises due to an over-issue of notes were thus eliminated.

### **The Anti-Corn-Law Movement**

In 1838 the Anti-Corn-Law League was founded at Manchester, its two leaders, Cobden and Bright, being connected



with the Lancashire cotton industry. Richard Cobden was a master of facts and figures and admirably fitted to present the economic case against the Corn Laws. His Quaker colleague, John Bright, was a powerful orator who conveyed to his audiences his own burning sense of the injustice of these laws. The League was supported by the industrial and commercial classes in the north and soon demonstrated its superiority to the Chartist movement in all the arts of political propaganda—meetings, processions, bazaars, and literature. The new penny post and the railways facilitated its task.

The Corn Laws were attacked for many reasons. They existed, it was argued, to maintain the high rents of landlords, and by excluding cheap foreign corn they raised the price of bread. But they also lowered the productive capacity of the workers by depriving them of cheap bread, and in this way they injured our industries. Furthermore our export trade and shipping suffered, for if we did not buy from foreigners, how could they buy from us? To these arguments it was replied that a flourishing agriculture was necessary for the nation's security, and that available cheap foreign corn was more a product of the League's imagination than an actual fact. Furthermore the landlords accused the manufacturers of wanting to reduce the price of bread so as to lower wages.

### **'Rotten Potatoes' and Repeal**

When Cobden and Bright were returned to Parliament they succeeded, after several years, in converting Peel to their point of view. But Peel, as leader of the landowning party which supported the Corn Laws, was in a difficult position and hesitated over his next step. In 1845 it was forced upon him. Blight attacked the Irish potato crop, and the staple diet of the greater part of the Irish peasantry lay rotting in the ground. A month's rain also ruined the English corn-harvest and prevented relief from that quarter. Only repeal of the Corn Laws could save Ireland from starvation, and this Peel courageously decided upon. Lord John Russell in his 'Edinburgh Letter' pledged the Whigs to support repeal, but opposition inside his



own Cabinet obliged Peel to resign (December, 1845). Russell was unable to form a ministry and Peel returned. With the support of Whig votes in the Commons and of the influential Wellington in the Lords the Corn Laws were repealed in 1846.

The industrial classes, given the vote in 1832, had won their first triumph; but the instrument of that triumph, Sir Robert Peel, was a broken man, and the Conservative party which he had built up was a broken party. About one hundred Tories supported their leader's action. Small in number, these 'Peelites' contained the cream of the Conservatives with men like Aberdeen, Gladstone, and Cardwell. After acting as a third party for the next dozen years most of them passed over to the Whigs. The bulk of the Conservatives regarded Peel as a traitor and recalled how he had effected similar *volte-faces* over the resumption of cash payments and Catholic Emancipation. Their feelings were voiced by Disraeli, who poured clever and bitter scorn upon Peel's "great betrayal," and on the very same night as the repeal they combined with the Whigs to drive the Prime Minister from office. Peel died four years later (1850) after a fall from his horse. Apart from a few short minority ministries the party he had built up, and then broken, was out of power for twenty-eight years—from 1846 till Disraeli's ministry beginning in 1874.

### **Peel and Ireland**

Rotten potatoes had not been Peel's only trouble from across the Irish Sea. In the early forties O'Connell led an agitation for the repeal of the Union. 1843 was to be the 'Year of Repeal,' and a monster meeting was arranged at Clontarf near Dublin. At the last moment Peel forbade the meeting, and O'Connell, true to his belief in constitutional methods, called it off. His submission lost him much support, and the leadership of the Irish malcontents passed into the hands of the revolutionary Young Ireland party. O'Connell died in 1847.

In 1845 Peel wrestled with the problem of Irish education. In face of much Protestant opposition, he increased considerably the government grant made to Maynooth College, a seminary



for training Irish Catholic priests. He also established three Queen's Colleges and by barring all religious instruction in these hoped to win both Catholic and Protestant support for his scheme. Instead, both parties denounced these 'godless' colleges and boycotted them. Land tenure, tithes, education, and, overriding all other questions, Repeal, kept Ireland in a state of ferment, and it was over a bill to maintain order in that unhappy isle that Peel was defeated in 1846.

### **Lord John Russell's Ministry (1846-1852)**

Peel was succeeded by the Whigs under Lord John Russell. The new government was opposed by the official Conservatives led by Disraeli in the Commons and by Stanley, who had succeeded to the Derby peerage, in the Lords. Two other groups, the Peelites and the small 'Manchester School' of Cobden and Bright, gave general support to the government.

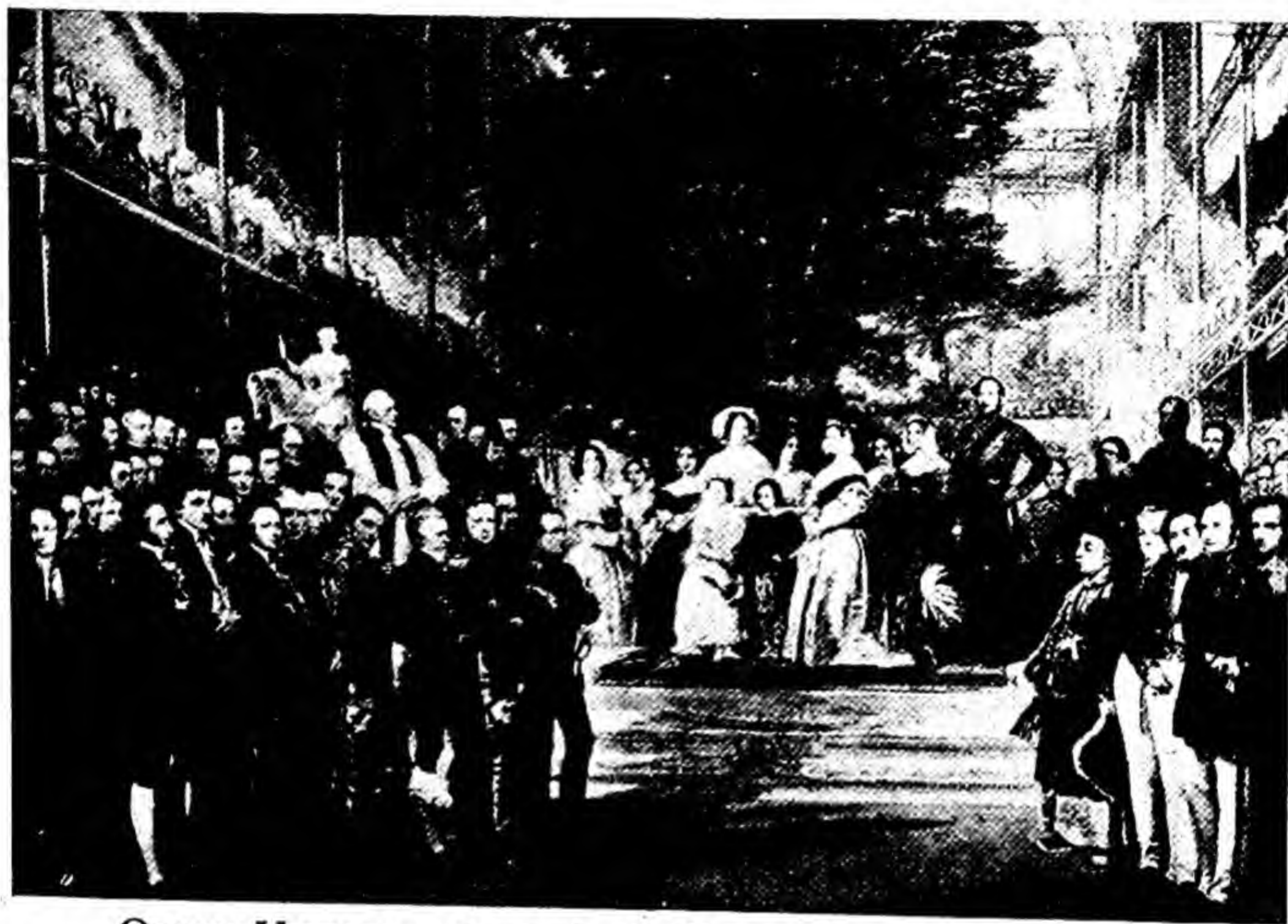
For several years the Irish question demanded attention. Food and seed were imported by the government and relief schemes instituted. Hundreds of thousands of Irish emigrated, mainly to America, and destitution killed many more; from now on Ireland's population which had been over 8 millions in 1841 began to dwindle to its present figure of just over 4 millions. In 1848 Young Ireland staged a revolt, but the movement proved a fiasco and was easily suppressed in the 'Battle of Widow McCormack's Cabbage Garden.'

The middle years of the century were a period of steady progress and contentment. Peel's reforms had abolished the worst forms of hunger, and England was becoming the 'workshop of the world.' In 1847 the Ten Hours Act was passed, followed in 1848 by a Public Health Act—events described elsewhere. In 1849 the surviving relics of the Navigation Laws were swept away. The Great Exhibition of 1851 symbolized the spirit of the age. The Prince Consort as its president worked hard to show the world the tremendous strides of recent generations in science and industry. The exhibition of manufactures, some foreign but most British, was held in Hyde Park, where the Crystal Palace was erected—later to be removed to South



London where eighty years afterwards it was destroyed by fire. Out of the profits of the exhibition the South Kensington museums were established.

In 1852 the Foreign Secretary, Palmerston, who had been



QUEEN VICTORIA OPENING THE GREAT EXHIBITION OF 1851

From a picture in the Victoria and Albert Museum

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forced to resign owing to disagreements over foreign policy, had his "tit for tat with Johnny Russell" by turning the government out of office.

### **Uneasy Governments (1852-1855)**

A stop-gap Tory ministry was formed (1852) with Derby as Prime Minister and Disraeli as Chancellor of the Exchequer. No attempt was made to revive the Corn Laws, but Gladstone 'foamed at the mouth' over Disraeli's budget and the government fell before the end of the year.

For three years (1852-1855) the country was governed by a coalition of Peelites and Whigs. Lord Aberdeen, Prime Minister, and Gladstone, Chancellor of the Exchequer, were the most prominent Peelites; Russell, Foreign Secretary, and



Palmerston, Home Secretary (he was not to be trusted at the Foreign Office!), represented the Whigs. "England does not love coalitions," remarked Disraeli, and in truth the ministry had an unhappy history. In 1853 Gladstone introduced a Free Trade budget; the duties on over 100 articles, including soap, were abolished, and many others were reduced. The Chancellor also looked forward to repealing the income tax by 1860. But he reckoned without the Crimean War which broke out in 1854. Aberdeen and Gladstone had worked for a peaceful solution with Russia and when war came the government did not conduct it with the necessary vigour or efficiency. The sufferings of our soldiers during the winter of 1854-1855 were exposed by *The Times* and in 1855 the government fell. Palmerston, whose warlike attitude had captured popular imagination, became Prime Minister, and Gladstone and other Peelites resigned.

### **Palmerston as Prime Minister (1855-1865)**

For the next ten years, with one short exception, Palmerston was supreme. Events at home were overshadowed by those abroad and can be briefly described. The Crimean War was ended in 1856. Two years later Palmerston was driven from office. An Italian, Orsini, threw a bomb at Napoleon III, and, as the plot had been hatched in England, Palmerston introduced a Conspiracy-to-Murder Bill to make such things more difficult in future. He was accused of truckling to France and was forced to resign.

A second Derby-Disraeli minority ministry then took over (1858-1859). One of its tasks was to settle affairs in India after the Mutiny of 1857. Disraeli, who was Jewish in blood but Christian in religion, secured the admission of Jews to Parliament in 1858. But in the following year he failed to pass a Reform Bill granting 'fancy franchises' to people with educational and other special qualifications, and the government resigned.

Palmerston returned to office with experienced recruits to help him—Russell at the Foreign Office and Gladstone at the



Exchequer. 1859 was a landmark in Gladstone's career, for after thirteen years as a Peelite, attached to neither of the two great political parties, he now threw in his lot with the Whigs. Palmerston, Russell, and Gladstone—these formed the 'Triumvirate' which governed Britain for the next six years.

Gladstone's budgets saw the completion of Free Trade. His 'Crown and Summit' Budget of 1860 abolished 371 separate duties, leaving only forty-eight articles taxed, and these, like tobacco, were taxed for revenue and not protection. Gladstone's proposal to repeal the paper duties, and thus cheapen newspapers, was rejected by the Lords; the Commons protested and Gladstone won his point in the following year by including all his budget proposals in one bill which the Lords could not amend and dared not reject. In 1860 Cobden concluded with Napoleon III a Free Trade Treaty, reducing taxes on British manufactures and on French wines and silks. Relations between the two countries had recently been very strained owing to British distrust of Napoleon's aims, and the treaty had the important political result of promoting Anglo-French friendship. The dream of the 'Manchester School' that international trade would shed its worn-out fetters and that economic interdependence would bind the nations together in peace and harmony seemed about to be realized. The next few decades shattered it. Wars and rumours of wars multiplied, and trade, far from promoting co-operation, only served to breed imperial rivalries.

In 1861 the Prince Consort died; his last service to the country that had never fully appreciated him was to ease our strained relations with the U.S.A. by moderating a dispatch over the *Trent* affair (see p. 184). The unhappy Queen retired for long from public affairs, and the monarchy suffered in the nation's esteem. In 1865 Palmerston died. For years he had withstood the growing demand for further parliamentary reform that even his two henchmen, Russell and Gladstone, had by now embraced. His death liberated new forces which soon brought the rule of the middle classes to an end.



## QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Summarize the achievements of Peel's ministry (1841-1846).
2. Describe the main outlines of Peel's career.
3. Describe the completion of Free Trade during the years 1840-1860.
4. Write notes on: Richard Cobden, the Peelites, Daniel O'Connell, the Prince Consort.
5. Discuss in class Peel's alleged betrayal of his previous opinions over (a) resumption of cash payments (1819); (b) Catholic Emancipation (1829); (c) repeal of the Corn Laws (1846).



## CHAPTER XII

### PALMERSTON AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS (1830-1865)

#### 'Pam'

HENRY JOHN TEMPLE, third Viscount Palmerston, lived from 1784 to 1865. As an Irish peer he was eligible for election to the House of Commons, and it was there that he passed his long political life of nearly sixty years. He entered Parliament as a Tory and from 1809 to 1828 served as Secretary at War. With other Canningites he left Wellington's ministry in 1828, disagreeing with the Duke's opposition to all Parliamentary reform, and two years later he became Foreign Secretary in Lord Grey's Whig ministry.

For the next thirty-five years (apart from the few, mostly short, periods of Tory rule) Palmerston's name is so closely linked with British foreign policy that it is impossible to think of one without the other. He remained Foreign Secretary under Grey and Melbourne from 1830 to 1841 (except for Peel's 'Hundred Days,' 1834-1835); was again Foreign Secretary under Russell from 1846 to 1851; returned as Home Secretary under Aberdeen from 1852 to 1855, when the Crimean War made him Prime Minister—a post he held till his death in 1865 except for the brief Derby-Disraeli ministry 1858-1859. Ignoring brief interruptions, his career can be summarized as follows: Foreign Secretary during most of the years 1830 to 1855, the main exception being Peel's ministry 1841 to 1846; Prime Minister 1855 to 1865.

3 His policy throughout was inspired by a vigorous defence of British interests and of those objects dear to the greater part of the nation. He supported constitutional movements abroad and championed nations struggling to become free. He likewise opposed autocracy and oppression, especially in Austria and Russia. The Russian 'bogy' of expansion towards the Mediterranean and India was never long absent from his thoughts. His jaunty manner, love of sport, capacity for hard work, and



insular prejudice against anything foreign made him beloved by the public, to whom he was just 'Pam.' His defects increased with his own self-confidence. His blunt language (he called Austria "an old woman") created enemies, and he was too fond of waving the big stick. To the critics of his rough tongue he was 'Lord Pumicestone': in French circles he was '*ce terrible milord Palmerston*'; while German courts recited the couplet,

*Hat der Teufel einen Sohn,  
Ist er sicher Palmerston.*

*i.e.*, if the Devil has a son, surely he is Palmerston. His habit of doing things 'off his own bat' created difficulties for his colleagues and his sovereign. Moreover, after 1832 he consistently opposed further reform and indeed took little interest in domestic affairs at all. He has not unjustly been described as liberal abroad and conservative at home.

### **Belgian Independence (1830)**

When Louis Philippe succeeded the reactionary Charles X of France in 1830, it might have been expected that Britain and France would draw closer together. To some extent this was so, but Louis Philippe was anxious to strengthen his position by successes in foreign policy, and several crises during his reign found the two countries in opposite camps.

Stimulated by the example of France, the Belgians revolted and threw off Dutch rule. The despotic powers, as well as Holland, opposed the revolt; France and Britain supported it. Palmerston had two objects. The first was to ensure Belgian independence, and this was done by dispatching a naval force to the Dutch coast while a French army marched into Belgium. The second was to prevent Louis Philippe from placing his own son on the new throne or obtaining territorial compensation for the help given to Belgium. Either of these would have threatened that integrity of the Low Countries which has always been a cardinal point in British policy. Palmerston succeeded again. The new crown went to Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, the German widower of an English princess and the uncle of the



future Queen Victoria, while the integrity of Belgium was guaranteed by the Great Powers in 1839—the 'scrap of paper' torn up by Germany in 1914. Palmerston had won his spurs.

### **Mehemet Ali**

The decade 1830-1840 produced other problems. In Spain and Portugal rival parties inside the royal houses contested the thrones. Palmerston championed the more liberal candidates and also prevented France from increasing her influence over the peninsula.

In 1831 Mehemet Ali of Egypt revolted against his master, the Sultan of Turkey, claiming rewards promised him for his help during the Greek War of Independence. Mehemet Ali's troops invaded Syria, and the Sultan turned to Russia for aid. Mehemet Ali was checked, but Russian influence over Turkey, and in particular over the Dardanelles, was increased (1833). Six years later the Egyptian Pasha revolted again, and this time he was backed by France, which hoped to obtain concessions in Egypt and Syria. Palmerston acted with vigour to check France and prevent Russia from still further exploiting the situation. In 1840 he promoted a Quadruple Alliance of Britain, Russia, Austria, and Prussia, which ordered Mehemet Ali to withdraw to Egypt; otherwise, said Palmerston, he would be thrown into the Nile. By the following year France had swallowed her pride, Mehemet Ali was back in Egypt, and the Russian threat to the Straits was removed. In 1839, moreover, the Sultan of Aden had been forced to accept a British protectorate to save himself, he was informed, from the designs of Mehemet Ali.

### **The Opium War (1840-1842)**

In 1833 the East India Company lost its monopoly of trade with China. The opening of the China trade now aggravated difficulties which were bound to arise where merchants sought to open up a country that merely closed its doors and regarded all foreigners as inferiors. In particular the Chinese government forbade the importation of opium from India into China,



but was unable to prevent it. In 1840 it confiscated large quantities of opium and war followed. The superior arms of the West soon prevailed, and in 1842 the Treaty of Nanking gave Britain the valuable island of Hong Kong and opened five Chinese ports to foreign trade.

### **Lord Aberdeen as Foreign Secretary (1841-1846)**

In 1841 Melbourne was succeeded by Peel, and Aberdeen took Palmerston's place at the Foreign Office. Under the peaceful Aberdeen British policy soon became much less bellicose. In 1842 the Ashburton Treaty settled a dispute with the U.S.A. concerning the boundary between Maine and New Brunswick. A more difficult problem arose on the Pacific coast where the U.S.A. claimed all the area west of the Rockies including present-day British Columbia. The Oregon Treaty of 1846 settled the question peacefully by extending the forty-ninth parallel, already the boundary east of the Rockies, across to the Pacific coast (see map, p. 63).

With France Aberdeen settled a number of outstanding questions, but was soon involved in difficulties over the complicated affair of the Spanish marriage. Louis Philippe wished to marry one of his sons to the young Spanish Queen, or failing that to her sister whose future children might quite easily succeed to the throne. Aberdeen objected and suggested other possible husbands. France objected to these and so the dispute dragged on. When Palmerston returned to the Foreign Office in 1846 he was immediately presented by a *fait accompli*; Louis Philippe's son was married to the Queen's sister. Britain was indignant at what she regarded as a breach of faith. As for Louis Philippe, he lost the friendship of Britain and two years later his own crown, and his family gained nothing eventually from the marriage.

### **Palmerston at his Worst (1846-1851)**

For five years Palmerston excelled himself in slighting his colleagues and brandishing the big stick abroad. The Queen and the Prince Consort (the latter a serious student of affairs



with a close knowledge of foreign courts) were affronted at Palmerston's habit of ignoring their existence, or, if he did seek their advice, of neglecting it.

In 1850 a Greek mob at Athens attacked the property of Don Pacifico, a Portuguese Jew, who, because he was born at Gibraltar, was technically a British subject. Don Pacifico claimed compensation (generally admitted to have been grossly excessive), and when the Greek government showed reluctance to pay it, Palmerston sent a British fleet to Greece with instructions to take Athens! He consulted neither his own colleagues nor those foreign countries closely concerned with the independence of Greece. The Queen and the Prince Consort disapproved of his action, and the Lords voted a condemnation. In the Commons he met a storm of opposition, but he eventually triumphed by making a four-hour speech wherein he claimed the same protection for a British subject as an ancient Roman had been sure of when he uttered the words *Civis Romanus sum*.

In the same year the Queen presented the Prime Minister, Lord John Russell, with a memorandum demanding that Palmerston should seek her advice and acquaint her with his decisions. Palmerston promised to mend his ways but went on as before. The 1848 revolutions in Europe were now over and reaction was taking its revenge. Palmerston had expressed sympathy with the revolutionaries, and when the Austrian general Haynau (nicknamed 'Hyena' and renowned for his cruelties) visited London and was beaten up by the workmen at Barclay's Brewery, Palmerston expressed his satisfaction. His reception of the exiled Hungarian rebel, Kossuth, still further offended Austria and his own colleagues. At the end of 1851 Louis Napoleon, the French President, imprisoned his opponents and extended his own term of office—the prelude to the establishment of the second French Empire. Palmerston on his own initiative signified his approval. Lord John Russell had had enough and dismissed his Foreign Secretary (1851), but shortly afterwards was himself defeated by Palmerston's "tit for tat" (1852). When, after a short Tory interlude, Aberdeen



formed his coalition the Foreign Office was given to Russell, and Palmerston, it was thought, was rendered harmless in the Home Office. Within three years the Crimean War made 'Pam' Prime Minister.

### **The Crimean War: Causes**

The Crimean War was fought by Britain, France, and Turkey to prevent Russia from exploiting the weakness of Turkey for her own benefit. In the middle of the war the allies were joined by Piedmont, desirous of obtaining a French alliance to drive the Austrians out of Italy.

The Tsar had never ceased to regard the Sultan as the 'sick man' of Europe, and twice within the previous ten years had suggested to Britain a partition of the dying man's estates. Moreover, the Treaty of Kutchuk Kainardji (1774) had given Russia vague rights of protection over the Christian subjects of the Sultan. These rights Russia now pressed to the full, and it was this more than anything else that precipitated the war. Britain, as usual, regarded Russian motives with suspicion. It was true that Russia had close racial and religious ties with the Balkan peoples, who were largely Slavonic in race and Orthodox in religion. But Britain feared the extension of Russian power towards India and Constantinople. If Russia controlled the latter she would have an easy outlet to the Mediterranean and a safe hiding-place in the Black Sea. If too she were allowed to 'protect' millions of scattered subjects of the Sultan, there would be no end to her interference. Napoleon III had his own reasons for opposing Russia. He wanted military success to avenge '1812,' and he was offended because the Tsar refused to address him as Brother-Emperor. Moreover, a dispute broke out about the guardianship of certain holy places in Palestine which were under the nominal rule of Turkey. Napoleon pressed the claims of the Catholic clergy while the Tsar championed the Orthodox Church. The question was more a test case than anything else and was settled just before war broke out; but it aroused feelings and illustrated the extent to which religious pretexts might be used to threaten Turkish integrity.



The situation was aggravated by personal factors. The Tsar Nicholas I was looked upon as the embodiment of reaction; his subjects were still serfs and he had aided Austria in 1849 in suppressing Hungarian freedom. The British public regarded him as a monster, and war-fever swept the country. The Tsar's envoy at Constantinople, Prince Menschikoff, was overbearing in pressing his master's claims. Worst of all, the British cabinet was divided; Aberdeen and Gladstone sought peace, Russell and Palmerston were prepared for war. The war-party was represented at Constantinople by the British ambassador, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, who had a personal grudge against the Tsar. Lord Stratford had influence over the Sultan, and although he cannot be accused of deliberately inciting Turkey to war, his presence undoubtedly stiffened the Sultan's attitude. Thus while Nicholas I pressed his claims and hoped that the peace-party in Britain would prevail, the Sultan resisted and looked for support from the war-party. In the end Britain, under Aberdeen's weak leadership, just drifted into war.

In the summer of 1853 Russia invaded Wallachia and Moldavia (modern Roumania). A congress at Vienna made a last-minute effort to avert war by producing the Vienna Note which merely repeated Russia's vague rights under the Treaty of Kutchuk Kainardji. The Sultan rejected this note, and in October, 1853, declared war on Russia. Next month the Turkish fleet was destroyed at Sinope. Russian naval power was shown to be a reality, and revenge for this so-called 'massacre' was loudly demanded. In March, 1854, Britain and France declared war.

### **The Crimean War (1854-1856): Events**

After an unsuccessful naval bombardment of the Russian Baltic fortress of Kronstadt, the allies concentrated upon the destruction of Sebastopol, the naval base in the Crimea. A combined British and French force landed in the Crimea under the command of Lord Raglan and St Arnaud. The aged British commander personified the outlook of the British army which had not changed since the Napoleonic wars; Raglan was a



Peninsular War veteran who could not get out of the habit of referring to the enemy as the French! The allies won their first victory at the River Alma, but by failing to follow it up allowed the Russians to complete the defences of Sebastopol. Later in 1854 occurred the battle of Balaclava (memorable for the Charge of the Light Brigade when, through mistaken orders, 600 horsemen charged the murderous Russian batteries) and the battle of Inkerman, the 'soldiers' battle,' fought in a thick fog.

The Russian winter of 1854-1855, when the Tsar boasted of his allies, Generals 'Janvier et Février,' exposed our soldiers to terrible hardships. Food, clothing, and other essential stores were grossly inadequate and the hospital arrangements at Scutari were disgraceful. Russell, the war correspondent of *The Times*, was able by means of the new telegraph to keep the British public up to date in its news, and popular indignation rose against the blundering incompetence in high places. Florence Nightingale overrode Victorian conventions and obstructive officialdom by organizing a band of nurses who soon improved matters. The 'Lady with the Lamp' has become a legend, but in truth her work only began with the Crimean War. For the rest of her long life (she died in 1910) Florence Nightingale worked hard to improve nursing, both military and civil, and to acquire political and social rights for women. Her nurses were a distinct improvement on the drink-sodden Mrs Gamp portrayed by Dickens in *Martin Chuzzlewit*. Early in 1855 Aberdeen's government, resisting an inquiry into the mismanagement of the war, fell, and Palmerston became Prime Minister. In February Nicholas I died, or, as *Punch* expressed it, General Février 'turned traitor.' The new Tsar was more inclined to peace, especially after the allies captured Sebastopol later in the year.

The Peace of Paris (1856) provided for a mutual restoration of conquests and guaranteed the integrity of the Turkish Empire. The Tsar gave up his claims of protection and the Sultan promised (as usual) to treat his Christian subjects better. Moldavia and Wallachia were granted self-government under



Turkish suzerainty. The Black Sea was neutralized by being declared open to all merchant ships and Russia was forbidden to keep warships there or establish fortifications. An addendum



### THE NEAR EASTERN QUESTION (1800-1914)

to the treaty attempted to regulate commerce in times of war by declaring it illegal to interfere with neutral goods in enemy ships or enemy goods in neutral ships; contraband of war was excepted, but as this is a vague and elastic term, the freedom of the seas has always broken down in practice.

Thus the 'sick man' was restored to health—for the time being. Six years later Moldavia and Wallachia formed semi-



independent Roumania, and in 1871 Russia denounced the neutrality of the Black Sea. Turkish promises of good government were broken and after twenty years the Christians revolted. This, together with our drifting policy before the war and our blunders in its execution, has led many to follow John Bright in wondering whether 'Crimea' should not be written 'A crime.'

### Foreign Affairs after 1856

In 1856 the Chinese authorities seized a pirate-ship, the *Arrow*, which was manned by Chinese and was really a Chinese vessel. But it had once been registered as British and was flying the British flag. Palmerston showed up at his worst by bullying and bombarding the Chinese government till in 1860 it granted extra trading-privileges and recognition of our officials in China.

In 1857 the Indian Mutiny broke out. It was suppressed in the same year but the necessary rearrangements in the government of India were carried out by the Derby-Disraeli ministry (1858-1859), for in 1858 the Orsini bomb incident had brought about Palmerston's fall (see *p.* 170). Orsini's bomb failed to harm Napoleon III but it gingered him up in his determination to help Italy, and in 1859 French and Piedmontese troops began their task of expelling Austria from the Italian peninsula. In 1859-1860 Italian unification was all but completed. First Lombardy was united with Piedmont; then the duchies of the north; and finally, after the expedition of Garibaldi and his redshirts, Naples and part of the Papal states. The British government (1859-1865) was now the 'Triumvirate' of Palmerston, Gladstone, and Russell. Foreign travel had made them acquainted with the cruelties of Austrian and Bourbon rule in Italy and with the aspirations of Italian patriots, and they gave Italy every support, diplomatic and moral, short of going to war. When Garibaldi crossed from Sicily to the mainland a British fleet in the offing watched over his passage. The romantic Italian soldier became the darling of the British public, and printed or pottery representations of their hero adorned many a Victorian home.



**The American Civil War (1861-1865)**

As the United States of America developed its economy and as the pioneers pushed the frontier towards the Pacific, serious differences arose between the northern and the southern states. The North was becoming industrialized and desired the protection of tariffs; the South devoted itself to cotton-growing and opposed tariffs. The cotton plantations were run on slave-labour and the southerners wished to extend slavery into new states. The North opposed this and many, like John Brown, wished to abolish slavery altogether. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* provided propaganda against slavery, and when the southerners hanged John Brown for resorting to force, the North immortalized him in song. Eventually the southern states claimed the right to secede from the Union and manage their own affairs, and after they had captured Fort Sumter, the newly elected President, Abraham Lincoln, called upon the North to maintain the Union by force of arms. Later he announced his intention of abolishing slavery altogether. By 1865 the North had won; the Union was thus preserved and slavery abolished. The noble Lincoln was murdered in his hour of triumph.

The British government professed neutrality, but its sympathies, along with those of the ruling-classes generally, were with the South. The 'Yankees' of the north were in their view radicals and democrats trying to force their opinions upon the gentlemen of the south. Moreover northern trade and industry competed with our own, and the issue at stake was thought to be, not the question of slavery, but the right of the South to manage its own affairs. The working-classes of northern England realized the real issues at stake and favoured Lincoln's cause. This was the more surprising because the northern blockade of southern commerce and the inevitable interruptions made by war cut off our supplies of raw cotton. Lancashire experienced a cotton famine which produced widespread distress and unemployment.

Two affairs worsened the relations between the British government and the northern states. In 1861 a northern war-



ship stopped a British vessel, the *Trent*, and, contrary to all international law, took off two southern envoys on their way to England. There was grave danger of war, but the Prince Consort persuaded the government to moderate the tone of its note, and Lincoln released the envoys. In the next affair, Britain was to blame, for the British government negligently allowed a southern raider, the *Alabama*, to be built at Birkenhead and then put to sea (1862). For two years the *Alabama* preyed on northern commerce, and the North claimed compensation. The dispute dragged on till 1872, when Gladstone took the sensible though quite unusual step of submitting the case to international arbitration, as a result of which we paid the United States £3,250,000.

### *Finale*

In 1863 the Ionian Islands, where a few years before Gladstone had been sent to investigate unrest, were transferred to Greece. In the previous year Bismarck had become Prussian Chancellor and was beginning the work which within ten years created the German Empire. When he singled out Denmark as his first victim, Palmerston thought to frighten him by declaring that Denmark would not fight alone. Bismarck took no heed, and Denmark unaided was defeated by Prussia and Austria (1864). At last Palmerston's bluff had been called, the bluff that had carried him successfully through storm and stress for thirty years. It was symptomatic. When he died in the following year a new world was already being born for which his 'big stick' methods, his insular superiority, and his indifference to pressing social problems were no longer fitted.

### QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. What do you think were the good and bad features of Palmerston's foreign policy?
2. Describe the relations between Britain and France during the period 1830-1848.
3. Write an essay on the Crimean War.



4. Describe the relations between Britain and the U.S.A. during the American Civil War.

5. Write notes on: Mehemet Ali, Don Pacifico, Florence Nightingale.



## CHAPTER XIII

### DISRAELI'S REFORM ACT (1867)

#### **Parliamentary Reform Again**

LORD JOHN RUSSELL (who became Earl Russell and entered the Lords) succeeded Palmerston as Prime Minister, while Gladstone became the government's spokesman in the Commons (1865). The demand for further parliamentary reform had long been growing; it was supported by the trade unions who wished thereby to improve their legal position, and by the powerful oratory of the Quaker radical, John Bright. Russell and Gladstone had for some time favoured reform but had been overridden by Palmerston. With Palmerston gone, the old Whig party was fast transformed by its new leaders into the Liberal party of modern times. In 1866 Gladstone introduced a moderate reform measure, but it was rejected by a combination of Tories and disaffected Whigs—the latter, led by Robert Lowe, being compared by Bright with the discontented who sought refuge with David in the Cave of Adullam.

Russell's government resigned and Lord Derby formed his third minority ministry dependent upon the votes of the 'Adullamites.' The agitation for reform flared up again, and a large crowd broke the railings of Hyde Park to hold their meeting. Realizing that reform must come and that a Tory act would redound to his party's credit and be safer than a Whig one, Disraeli persuaded his leader to sanction a new Reform Bill. Disraeli's original bill included all kinds of safeguards to take away with one hand what was being granted with the other; but during the debate the Whigs swept these away, and the bill as finally passed was more democratic than the Whig bill of the year before. A proposal of John Stuart Mill to extend the vote to women was met with derision; but it obtained seventy-three votes including that of Henry Fawcett, the blind Cambridge economist.



### The Reform Act of 1867

Disraeli's act gave the borough vote to the lodger in unfurnished rooms who paid £10 a year, as well as to the £10 householder; in the counties a £12 rental secured the vote. Forty-five seats were taken from the smaller boroughs and given to the larger counties and towns.

The effect of the act was to double the electorate from one million to two millions, and to give the working-classes in the towns (not so far in the counties) a majority. Viewed thus it was a daring measure. Lord Derby called it a 'leap in the dark,' and Carlyle compared it with 'shooting Niagara.' Robert Lowe, reflecting on the illiteracy of many of the new voters, remarked, "We must now educate our masters." At the beginning of 1868 Disraeli took over the premiership from Derby, but held office a short time only, for, although the Tory leaders boasted that they had 'dished the Whigs' over the reform question, when the general election was held the new voters rejected their Tory benefactors and returned Gladstone to power (1868).

### QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Summarize the events leading to and the terms of the Reform Act of 1867.
2. Discuss in class the rights and wrongs of Disraeli's actions (1866-1867). (*N.B.*—Bear in mind that Disraeli had previously introduced a Reform Bill in 1859—see *p.* 170.)



# PART IV

## BRITAIN IN THE MODERN WORLD

### (1870-1914)

#### INTRODUCTION

#### **The European Background (1870-1914)**

THE year 1870 is a turning-point in European history. The Franco-German War saw the completion of German and Italian unification and the replacement of Napoleon III's Empire by the Third French Republic. Economic changes were of equal importance. Britain's lead was soon challenged by the U.S.A. and Germany, both of which in the 1890's surpassed her in steel production. In many countries Protection took the place of Free Trade, and the scramble for colonies as sources of raw materials and as markets for finished goods promoted imperial rivalries. The working-classes, under the influence of Karl Marx, began to embrace theories of socialism.

The tangled skein of international politics can only be unravelled by concentrating on a few main threads:

(1) The Franco-German War and the transference of Alsace-Lorraine left France embittered and Germany watchful.

(2) Russia and Austria-Hungary had conflicting views and interests in the Balkan peninsula where the Christian subjects of the Sultan were still struggling for their freedom.

(3) After 1890, when the new Kaiser William II dismissed Bismarck, Germany began a naval building programme which aroused increasingly the opposition of Britain.

(4) In the colonial sphere France for long challenged the British occupation of Egypt; Britain opposed Russian designs in the Near, Middle, and Far East; France and Italy were rivals in the Mediterranean; and Germany sought to prevent the French occupation of Morocco.

In 1878 the break-up of the Balkan peninsula was largely



effected by the Treaty of Berlin. In 1879 Germany and Austria concluded a Dual Alliance. This was transformed into the Triple Alliance in 1882 by the adhesion of Italy, smarting under the recent French occupation of Tunis.

In the 1880's occurred the 'scramble for Africa' on the part of Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and Belgium. Inside twenty years practically the whole of the 'dark continent' was partitioned. In the main it was effected peacefully, but it bequeathed a legacy of rivalries and unsolved problems.

In 1891-1894 Russia and France, fearing Germany, concluded a Dual Alliance. Very slowly Britain realized that she would have to abandon her own 'splendid isolation' and seek friends and allies. The Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902 was followed by the Anglo-French Entente of 1904 and the Anglo-Russian Entente of 1907. Europe was now divided into two armed camps. The Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907 were held, unsuccessfully, to induce them to disarm.

The ten years preceding the Great War witnessed a succession of crises aptly described as 'milestones to Armageddon.' In 1906 Germany failed at the Algeciras Conference to check French designs in Morocco. In 1908 Austria-Hungary aroused the antagonism of Serbia and Russia by annexing Bosnia-Herzegovina in the Balkans. In 1911 Germany made her final effort, unsuccessfully, to prevent the French occupation of Morocco. Finally, on June 28, 1914, the Austrian Archduke was murdered at Serajevo and the world was plunged into the horrors of the Great War.



## CHAPTER XIV

### THE DOMINANCE OF GLADSTONE (1868-1886)

#### **William Ewart Gladstone (1809-1898)**

GLADSTONE was the son of a wealthy Liverpool merchant and slave-owner, and after a brilliant career at Eton and Christ Church, Oxford, entered Parliament in 1832. His early speeches marked him out as "the last hope of the stern unbending Tories," and in 1841 he was selected by Peel to be Vice-President, and later President, of the Board of Trade. He had much to do with preparing the Free Trade measures of his



W. E. GLADSTONE  
*Photo Elliott and Fry, Ltd.*

leader, for whose memory he always had the greatest respect. On the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 he became a Peelite and for the next thirteen years wandered in the wilderness, unattached to either of the two great political parties. In 1852 he became Chancellor of the Exchequer in Aberdeen's coalition and introduced a Free Trade budget. He resigned in 1855 when the Crimean War ended the coalition. Four years later he entered Palmerston's second ministry (1859-1865) again as Chancellor of the Exchequer. He was now definitely

a Whig, or in modern terms a Liberal, for his progressive views soon made him impatient of his leader's Whiggish complacency. Under Palmerston he completed the work of Free Trade, and on the Prime Minister's death was the most important figure in his party. The premiership went, however, to the veteran Lord John Russell (1865-1866). In 1868 the general election following Disraeli's Reform Bill gave the Liberals a majority, and Gladstone became Prime Minister.

Gladstone was Prime Minister on four separate occasions.



His first ministry (1868-1874) was marked by important domestic reforms; his second ministry (1880-1885) by the third Reform Act; his last two ministries (1886 and 1892-1894) by his unsuccessful attempts to give Ireland Home Rule—attempts which split up his own party.

### **Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881)**

Gladstone's rival, Disraeli, was the son of a Jew who had become converted to Christianity. After a private education, supplemented by browsings in his father's library, he wrote his first novel, *Vivian Grey*. He made several unsuccessful attempts to enter Parliament as a Radical till, in 1837, he became a member for Maidstone. His foppish appearance, which included a bottle-green jacket, white waistcoat, and hair in ringlets, amused the House, and his maiden speech was shouted down. Before yielding to the uproar he uttered the prophetic words:

I have begun several things many times [laughter] and I have often succeeded at last [cries of 'question']. Ay, sir, and though I sit down now, the time will come when you will hear me.

In 1841 he was disappointed at his exclusion from Peel's ministry, but he busied himself during the next few years in forming with a few noblemen friends a 'Young England' party. The admitted social grievances of the masses could only be cured, they argued, if the Crown, the Church, and the ancient landed aristocracy took a more generous view of their responsibilities. The reforms of the upstart Whig industrialists or such democratic devices as manhood suffrage were insufficient to bridge the gulf between the 'two nations' of rich and poor. These ideas were embodied in Disraeli's two famous novels, *Coningsby* which dealt with politics, and *Sybil* which dealt with economic and social problems. It is noteworthy that although Disraeli in the Commons' debates opposed the People's Charter he always stressed the need for something to be done to alleviate the distress that had occasioned it.

In 1846 he led the attack on Peel during the debate on the



Corn Laws. He was soon the brains of the Conservative remnant, but deep-seated distrust on the part of the landowners of his Jewish blood, his strange appearance, and his incalculable brilliance prevented him for long from becoming the acknowledged leader of the party that he was building up. During the Derby ministries of 1852, 1858-1859, and 1866-1868, Disraeli acted as Chancellor of the Exchequer, but he was no great financier. In 1867 he 'educated' his party to accept the second Reform Bill, and in the following year became Prime Minister. His rival Gladstone was soon in office (1868-1874), and Disraeli's second but only important ministry occupied the years 1874-1880. It was marked by important social reforms and by Disraeli's personal triumph at the Congress of Berlin. In 1876 he was created Earl of Beaconsfield; he died in 1881.

### **The Two Men: A Contrast**

The careers and characters of these two men present many striking contrasts. Gladstone, with his public school and university education and his inherited wealth, found entry into politics a relatively easy matter. He began as a Tory and ended as a Liberal. He was a brilliant financier who after securing Free Trade devoted himself to domestic and Irish problems. He was deeply religious and viewed everything from the moral angle. Thus he realized keenly the iniquities of Turkish rule, and, unlike other statesmen, did not regret the dissolution of the Turkish empire. His seriousness of purpose left him with little sense of humour and his long speeches bored the Queen, with whom he was never a favourite. His writings dealt with religion or with ancient Greece, for he was a profound Greek scholar.

Disraeli lacked Gladstone's initial advantages of education and wealth, and his Jewish blood and un-English appearance told against him. He tried unsuccessfully to enter Parliament as a Radical and finished as the creator of modern Conservatism. His management of the nation's (and also of his own) finances showed him no economist; figures interested him far less than personalities. He, much more than Gladstone, was concerned



with foreign and imperial affairs and was influenced more by the hard facts of a situation than by its deeper moral issues. He would never, for example, have allowed himself to be engulfed in the boggy Irish problem. He closed his eyes to Turkish misrule and thought only of the Russian menace if Turkey decayed. He was witty in conversation and debate and took pains to understand the people with whom he dealt. He became a great favourite with the Queen, his 'fairy,' as he called her, while to her he was just 'Dizzy.' His writings, though often serious in purpose, took the form of novels and overflowed with *bons mots* and epigrams.

### **Gladstone's Ministry (1868-1874): Ireland**

"My mission is to pacify Ireland," said Gladstone on taking office. Why did Ireland need pacifying? Broadly for three reasons: religious grievances, the land question, and the connexion with England.

Ireland's population in the middle of the century was about eight millions; of these less than one million belonged to the established Irish Protestant Church, rather more than half a million were Presbyterians (mainly in Ulster), and the remaining six-and-a-half millions were Catholics. The Irish Protestant Church was supported partly out of tithes paid by the Catholic peasantry and partly out of its rich endowments in Ireland. Its wealth enabled it to pay large salaries to its bishops and other dignitaries; more than one post was sometimes held by the same person and there was much absenteeism. Catholic education had for long suffered owing to religious quarrels and prejudices.

Ireland was, and still is, an agricultural country, and its peasantry depended upon the land for their very existence. Much of this land had been stolen in the past by English and Scottish Protestants; many of these lived outside Ireland, managed their estates through grasping agents, and failed to understand or to heed the extreme poverty of the Irish peasant. Holdings were very small and the tenant (unlike his counterpart in England) was responsible for the farm buildings. His



tenancy was usually held on a very short lease and he was thus at the landlord's mercy. If he improved his land or buildings he might find his rent raised. If he refused to pay he could be evicted without any compensation for his improvements. Small wonder that agricultural methods were very primitive, that the peasant still depended upon his potato crop, and that agrarian disturbances were common!

The bolder Irish spirits demanded Home Rule as the only way out. They argued that by the repeal of the Act of Union, the expulsion or muzzling of the Protestants, and the granting to Ireland of a free Parliament of her own, Irishmen could get together and solve their problems themselves. But repeal was complicated by the opposition of vested interests, by questions of race, religion, and empire, and by the refusal of the Ulster Protestants to submit to Catholic rule.

After the Irish famine of 1845–1847 many Irish emigrated to the U.S.A. The American Civil War taught them methods of violence, and a Fenian Brotherhood was formed (named after the old Irish warriors) to extort concessions by force. In 1866 over a thousand Fenians tried to invade Canada from the U.S.A. In 1867 others attempted to seize Chester Castle; some killed a policeman in Manchester when trying to open a prison-van—for which three Fenians, venerated as the 'Manchester martyrs,' were hanged; others killed twelve people and wounded a hundred when they blew up part of Clerkenwell prison in London. These outrages made the Irish problem pressing when Gladstone assumed office.

In 1869 Gladstone passed, in the face of much opposition from Conservatives and the Lords, an act to disestablish the Irish Church. The Church lost many privileges dependent upon its official connexion with the State—including its ecclesiastical courts and its four bishops in the House of Lords. More important, somewhat less than one-half of its endowments was taken from it and devoted to the relief of Irish poverty.

In 1870 a Land Act provided that tenants evicted, except for non-payment of rent, should receive compensation. Where a tenant had made improvements he should likewise be compen-



sated if he left his holding. Arrangements were made to advance loans to enable tenants to purchase their land outright. The act failed to reach the roots of the trouble because it did not control rents or destroy the landlord's power of eviction.

Three years later an Irish University Bill to further Catholic education pleased no one and was rejected.

### **Gladstone's Ministry: Foreign Policy**

In 1870-1871 Gladstone was faced with problems arising out of the Franco-German War. At first British opinion, suspicious as usual of Napoleon III, especially when Bismarck revealed Napoleon's designs upon Belgium, was against France. Gladstone obtained from both France and Prussia assurances to respect Belgian neutrality, and as French misfortunes multiplied, British sympathy for humiliated France increased. Britain, however, with its small army, could obviously not intervene even if it had wished to do so on other grounds.

With France occupied, Russia renounced the clauses of the Treaty of Paris (1856) which forbade her to keep warships on the Black Sea or build fortifications. The British government could do no more than protest unless it were prepared to go to war.

In 1872, as explained elsewhere, Gladstone submitted the *Alabama* dispute with the U.S.A. to international arbitration. His action was much criticized, and it was alleged that the £3,250,000 compensation paid by Britain was excessive—an allegation later borne out by the inability of the American government to find claimants for the whole amount.

Gladstone's foreign policy appeared weak compared with the flag-wagging days of Palmerston. But it is difficult to see how else he could have acted, and the *Alabama* arbitration was cheaper and more sensible than going to war.

### **Gladstone's Ministry: Domestic Reforms**

The year 1870 saw the beginning of State education, rendered more than ever necessary by the enfranchisement of the town workers in 1867. Forster's Elementary Education Act



allowed the voluntary schools, mainly Church of England, to continue with the support of increased State grants. Where, however, these voluntary schools were insufficient (and by 1870 they were catering for about one-half of the children of the country) new schools were to be established by locally elected school boards. Religious controversy threatened to wreck the scheme until the compromise was reached that the Church schools could teach denominational religion, but that the State schools should give only undenominational Bible lessons; the 'conscience clause' enabled children to be kept away from any religious lesson. In 1871 the Universities Test Act abolished Church of England tests for all positions, except a very few, at Oxford and Cambridge.

In 1870 and the years following sweeping reforms were made in the civil service and the army. Posts in the former were henceforth to be filled by competitive examinations instead of by influence or family connexion. The army reforms were due to the ex-Peelite, Cardwell, who was Secretary for War. He made the civil minister, the Secretary for War, supreme over the Commander-in-Chief; this abolished divided responsibility for the army and gave Parliament closer control. He reduced the former long periods of recruitment to twelve years, part to be spent in the army and the rest in the reserve. He associated the regiments with particular counties, and divided them into two battalions, one to serve abroad while the other stayed at home. When he proposed to abolish the objectionable practice of wealthy soldiers, purchasing their commissions from those already holding them and to make the award of commissions dependent upon merit, the Lords objected. Gladstone accordingly withdrew the bill and obtained his way by an Order in Council issued by the Queen on her supreme authority over all the armed forces (1871). The Lords protested in vain.

In 1871 a new government department was created in the Local Government Board, a growth from the central Poor Law Commissioners of 1834. In the same year a Trade Union Act gave legal protection to union funds by allowing unions to



register as friendly societies; but another act laid down severe penalties for picketing, *i.e.*, persuading workmen not to enter a factory where a strike was in progress, and was much resented by the trade unions.

In 1872 the Ballot Act, by providing for secret voting, aimed at lessening undue influence at Parliamentary elections. In the same year a Licensing Act gave magistrates the power of issuing licences and laid down closing-hours for public houses. The Supreme Court of Judicature Act (1873) reorganized the law courts by grouping them all together as subdivisions of one Supreme Court of Judicature.

These memorable reforms did much to systematize and modernize the country's government. But they provoked much opposition. The Nonconformists opposed the use of public money to support Church of England schools. Trade Unionists resented the ban on peaceful picketing. The brewers thought the Licensing Act too strict, while temperance reformers thought it too moderate! The House of Lords and many of the upper classes disliked the introduction of democratic practices into the civil service and the army. The Church of England resented the disestablishment of the Irish Church and the abolition of religious tests at Oxford and Cambridge. The government's foreign policy seemed to lack 'drive,' and Disraeli voiced the feelings of the nation when he compared the ministerial bench to "a range of exhausted volcanoes." The general election returned the Conservatives to power (1874).

### **Disraeli's Ministry (1874-1880) : The New Conservatism**

If Peel was the first founder of modern Conservatism, Disraeli was the second. For twenty-eight years after the repeal of the Corn Laws the shattered Conservative party had never enjoyed majority power. It was Disraeli's task to re-create Conservatism, and this he did with eminent success and with a shifting of emphasis. "The Constitution, the Empire, and social reform"—this was the watchword of the new Conservatism. The traditional elements of the Constitution (the Crown, Church,



and aristocracy) were to be strengthened; the Empire to be cherished and extended; the 'condition of England question' to be tackled, as Disraeli had preached in his 'Young England' days thirty years before.

### **Disraeli's Ministry: Social Reform**

Many of the social reforms of Disraeli's ministry were due to the Home Secretary, Richard Cross, a Lancashire business man who realized the needs of the new England.

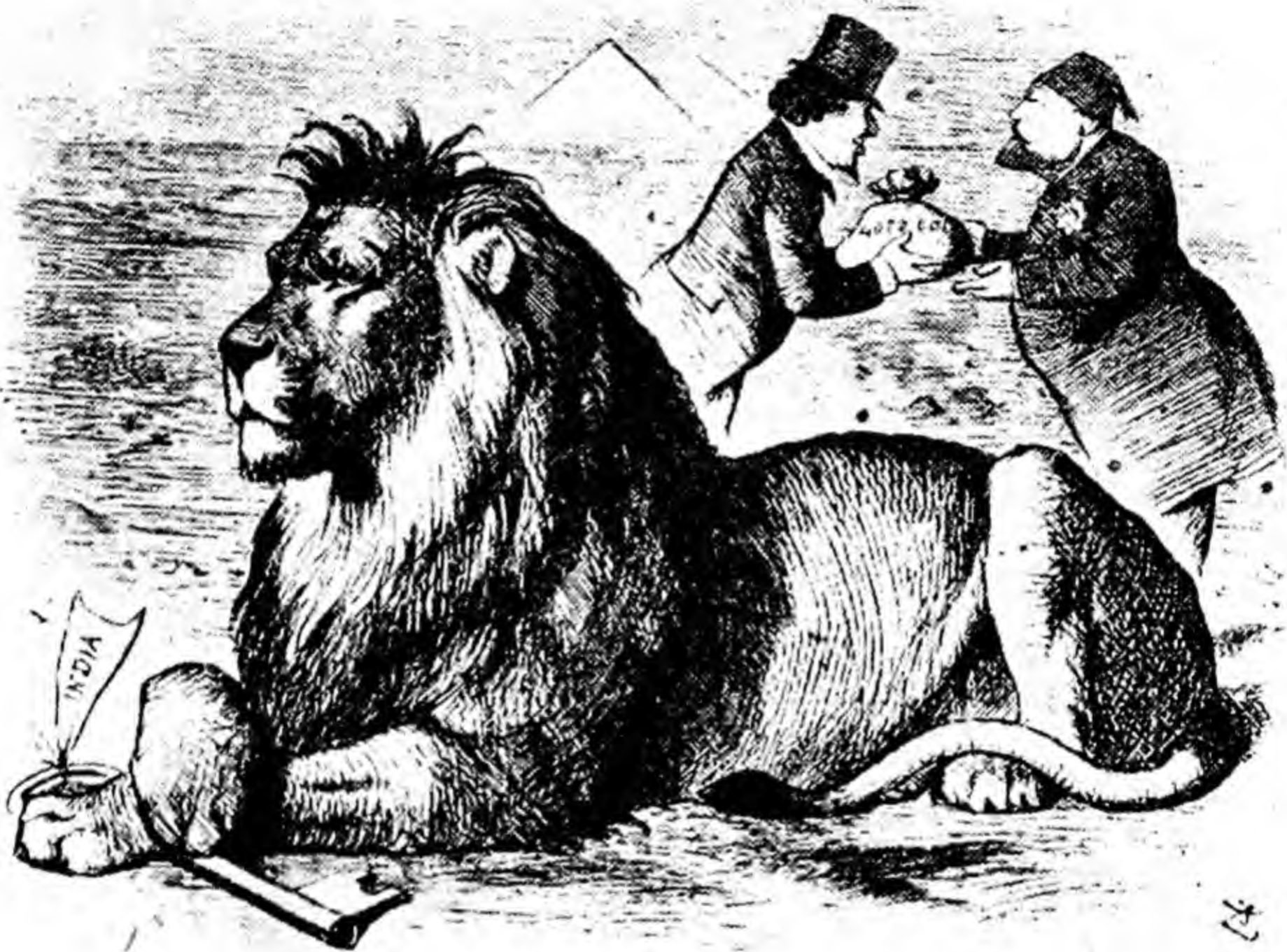
1875 was a veritable *annus mirabilis* of domestic reforms. Acts concerning trade unions remedied the defect of Gladstone's act by legalizing peaceful picketing. A great Public Health Act consolidated many previous measures, required local authorities to appoint medical officers of health and sanitary inspectors, and conferred wide powers over water-supply, sewage, infectious diseases, and so on. An Artisans' Dwellings Act enabled local authorities to condemn slum property and erect better houses in their stead. These and other acts were vigorously applied by the mayor of Birmingham, Joseph Chamberlain, who made his city a model of municipal government. Another act of this year was due less to the government than to the efforts of Samuel Plimsoll, M.P. for Derby. A Parliamentary—or rather unparliamentary!—outburst, in which he denounced his fellow-members as 'murderers,' led to the fixing of the Plimsoll line or loading-mark upon ships. This prevented the practice of overloading ships irrespective of the sailors' safety and covering by insurance any risks involved.

In 1876 elementary education was made compulsory, and an Enclosure of Commons Act prevented grasping landlords from robbing the public of their dwindling common land. In 1878 a Factory and Workshops Act consolidated previous acts, prohibited all employment of children under ten years of age and more than half-daily employment for children from ten to fourteen. The aged Lord Shaftesbury remarked that "two millions of people would bless the day when Mr Cross was asked to be Secretary of State for the Home Department."



**Disraeli's Ministry: Imperialism**

In 1875 the spendthrift Egyptian Khedive Ismail sought to raise money by selling his Suez Canal shares. Disraeli, against the advice of his colleagues, snapped them up. For £4,000,000 the British government acquired 176,000 shares out of the company's total of 400,000. It was good business financially and politically; the British government became the largest single shareholder in an undertaking originally due to French enter-



THE LION'S SHARE

In 1875 Disraeli bought for Britain the shares held by the Khedive of Egypt in the Suez Canal, thereby preserving the "Key of India."

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prise and skill. Anglo-French interest in Egypt was shown in 1876 when the two countries established a Dual Control to prevent Ismail from leading his country still farther down the slippery slope of bankruptcy.

The Queen's retirement since the Prince Consort's death had made the monarchy unpopular and kindled an interest in republicanism. Disraeli countered this by prevailing upon Victoria to appear in public till in time she became the popular



Queen of the jubilees. In 1875-1876 the Prince of Wales made a successful visit to India. In 1876 an act conferred upon Victoria the title of Empress of India, the new title being proclaimed with much ceremony at a great *darbar* in Delhi in the following year. The Queen was flattered, and India, with memories of the Mogul Empire, welcomed its new status.

Disraeli's other imperial ventures were less happily inspired. In 1877 Britain annexed the Boer Transvaal republic and two years later became involved in a Zulu war (see Chapter XVIII). The closing years of the ministry witnessed trouble in Afghanistan, where Britain sought to counter the growing influence of Russia. These expensive and mostly unsuccessful sideshows were unpopular and helped towards the ministry's final overthrow. Before then, however, Disraeli had scored the most spectacular triumph in his whole career—his victory over Russia at the Congress of Berlin.

### **Disraeli's Ministry: The Treaty of Berlin (1878)**

The Sultan had not reformed the government of his Christian subjects as he had promised by the Treaty of Paris (1856), and twenty years later the eastern question was reopened. The Christians of Montenegro and Bulgaria revolted; in the latter province they were savagely suppressed by irregular troops of the Sultan, known as Bashi-Bazouks. These Bulgarian atrocities stirred the conscience of Europe, and in 1877 Russia declared war on Turkey. The Turks put up a gallant resistance (their defence of Plevna is memorable), but by the end of the year they were overwhelmed. The Russians occupied Adrianople and even threatened Constantinople. In March, 1878, Russia imposed upon Turkey the Treaty of San Stefano; the Turkish empire was broken up and there was created a new Bulgarian state so large as to occupy one-half of the Balkan peninsula and to contain many non-Bulgarian subjects. Europe was alarmed at the spread of Russian influence, which would obviously be very strong over this new state of its own creation.

Opinion in Britain was, as usual, sharply divided over the



whole affair. Gladstone emerged from one of his many retirements to stress the moral, as distinct from the political, issues at stake. In a pamphlet which sold by thousands he condemned the atrocities of the "unspeakable" Turks and urged that they should be cleared out "bag and baggage from the province they have desolated and profaned," *i.e.*, from Bulgaria and not, as is sometimes supposed, from the whole of Europe. Gladstone's Christian appeal was echoed by the industrial workers of the north and by writers like Ruskin, Tennyson, and the historian Green. The rest of the country, carried away by the old distrust of Russia, took the contrary view. The Queen herself regretted she were not a man to "give those Russians, whose word one cannot believe, such a beating." She was supported by the financial interests in the City, by the leading newspapers, and by the London workers. A new word 'jingoist' arose from the popular music-hall song of the period:

We don't want to fight, but by jingo if we do,  
We've got the men, we've got the ships, we've got the money too.

Disraeli (now Lord Beaconsfield) took the popular anti-Russian view, but he kept his head and many of his moves were by way of bluff. In general his cabinet supported him, but there were serious differences of view as to what would justify war, and Disraeli spoke humorously of six parties among his colleagues. To impress Russia Disraeli obtained a vote of money for military supplies, moved Indian troops to Malta (on the authority of the Queen and not of Parliament), and sent a fleet to the Dardanelles. Russia gave way and consented to a revision of her terms at Berlin.

The Congress of Berlin (1878) met under the chairmanship of Bismarck; but it was Disraeli who dominated the meeting. "*Der alte Jude, das ist der Mann*" (the old Jew, he's the fellow) was Bismarck's comment. The resulting treaty made the following arrangements. Bulgaria was considerably reduced and split in two parts under Turkish suzerainty. Serbia, Montenegro, and Roumania, which had for long been independent in practice, were now recognized as such in law. Russia made small



gains in the Caucasus and obtained Bessarabia from Roumania. Austria was allowed to protect Bosnia-Herzegovina under Turkish suzerainty, and Britain obtained Cyprus on the payment of a tribute to the Sultan.

On their return with this 'peace with honour' Disraeli and his Foreign Secretary, Lord Salisbury, were fêted by the London crowds and awarded the Order of the Garter by the Queen. Much nonsense has been written criticizing the terms of the Treaty of Berlin. In truth it cannot be denied that the Bulgaria of Russia's creation was an artificial and unwieldy state that was best wiped off the map. Cyprus has been condemned as a useless acquisition, especially as Disraeli could have obtained Egypt instead, but the development of air travel and warfare and the opening up of valuable oil-fields in the middle east have subsequently proved its worth. It has been argued too that by stopping Russian expansion in the Balkans we diverted her attention towards India and the Far East; but would not this have happened in any case? The most serious criticism that can be urged against Disraeli is that after setting out to prop up the Turkish empire he consented to its break-up and allowed the Serbians of Bosnia-Herzegovina to come under Austrian protection. It would have been better if, like Gladstone, he had recognized frankly that the Turkish empire could not be kept intact and had split it up into strong compact states based upon racial divisions. This would have checked both Russian and Austro-German ambitions.

Disraeli's ministry suffered in the next two years from the failure of his meddlesome imperialism in South Africa and Afghanistan. Gladstone's whirlwind Midlothian campaign fanned the growing discontent, and in 1880 the government was defeated. Disraeli died the following year, and Lord Salisbury succeeded him as Conservative leader.

### **Gladstone's Second Ministry (1880-1885)**

Difficulties of all sorts confronted Gladstone's second ministry. The Queen's antagonism to her Prime Minister was evident. The cabinet contained two distinct wings, a right wing of the



old Whig aristocracy and a left wing led by the Radical ex-mayor of Birmingham, Joseph Chamberlain. As time went on the 'Grand Old Man,' as Gladstone grew to be called, was unable to keep the two wings together and he himself lost touch with his party. Ireland was seething with discontent and a strong Irish Nationalist party obstructed Parliamentary business. A 'ginger' group of Conservatives, led by Lord Randolph Churchill and nicknamed the 'Fourth Party,' embarrassed the government over Bradlaugh's repeated attempts to take his seat in the Commons, denied him because, as an atheist, he refused to take the oath. From Disraeli the government inherited imperial adventures in Asia and Africa; to proceed with them was against Gladstone's wishes, to withdraw would invite charges of weakness.

### **Ireland: Charles Stuart Parnell**

Despite Gladstone's Land Act of 1870, agrarian discontent had increased and was finding increasing expression in acts of violence. The mythical 'Captain Moonlight' burnt ricks and farmhouses, dug people's graves in front of their houses, and even resorted to murder. A Land League was formed as a kind of trade union against the English landowners. At the same time Charles Stuart Parnell was organizing a strong Irish Nationalist party in the House of Commons. Like O'Connell fifty years earlier, Parnell was opposed to violence, but otherwise was prepared to go to any length to get his way. Under him the Irish members made long speeches merely to obstruct Parliamentary business (one sitting went on continuously for forty-one hours!) till in the end Parliament, in its own self-defence, had to adopt methods of closing debates. In 1879 Parnell became president of the Irish Land League and suggested a new measure against landlords or anyone who represented their interests. It was to shun them like lepers, denying them food, drink, conversation, medical help, or any intercourse whatever. Such was the famous 'boycott,' named after an agent, Captain Boycott, against whom it was first applied.



While Gladstone's Chief Secretary, Forster, applied Coercion Acts to maintain law and order, the Prime Minister wrestled manfully with the land problem. His Land Act of 1881 prescribed fair rents, fixed tenure, and free sale, the famous Three F's. Land courts were to be established to determine fair rents over periods of fifteen years; tenants were to be secured in their holdings; but if they wished to leave, they could sell their interests in their land.

This creditable attempt to solve a difficult problem was denounced by the Irish who complained that the rents fixed were too high. Again coercion was necessary and Parnell himself was imprisoned in Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin. After some months he was released on the understanding, embodied in the 'Kilmainham Treaty' (1882), that he would assist the government in a policy of conciliation. Forster resigned, and a new Chief Secretary, Lord Frederick Cavendish, took his place. In Phoenix Park, Dublin, Cavendish and the head of the Irish civil service, Burke, were murdered by a gang of ruffians. The treaty with Parnell proved unworkable and the government fell back on coercion.

### **The Third Reform Act (1884)**

In the congenial field of domestic affairs Gladstone was more successful. The Corrupt Practices Act (1883) limited expenses and checked corruption during elections. In 1884 the third Reform Act gave the vote to the agricultural labourer and abolished the ten-pound rental limit for lodgers. In effect, there was now complete manhood suffrage with no distinction between the county and borough franchise. About two million new votes were added; far more than in either of the acts of 1832 or 1867. A Redistribution Act of 1885, insisted on by the Lords, made similar sweeping changes in the arrangement of constituencies. All boroughs of less than 15,000 inhabitants lost their separate representation; those between 15,000 and 50,000 were to have only one member. In this way 160 seats were redistributed.



## Overseas Entanglements

In Afghanistan the famous march of Roberts from Kabul to Kandahar retrieved a difficult situation. In South Africa the story was different, for there the Boers defeated a British force at Majuba Hill (1881). Gladstone had previously decided to reverse Disraeli's policy by granting independence to the Transvaal. He carried through this policy despite its appearance of retreat. In Egypt the Dual Control of Britain and France provoked a nationalist opposition. For internal reasons France backed out, and to protect European interests and lives Gladstone sanctioned the bombardment of Alexandria and the military occupation of Egypt (1882). His insistence upon the temporary nature of our occupation displeased imperialists at home and was disbelieved by our enemies abroad. In January, 1885, the death of General Gordon at Khartoum was laid at the door of Gladstone, who had refused to send relief till it was too late. Gordon had disobeyed instructions by staying on, but the Queen interpreted the feeling of the country when she condemned her minister. A few months later Gladstone took strong action to prevent Russia from crossing the Afghanistan frontier at Penjdeh; but this failed to save the government. Parnell came to terms with the Conservatives and they, with the help of dissatisfied Liberals, turned Gladstone out.

## Lord Salisbury's First Ministry (1885-1886)

Salisbury formed a stop-gap ministry, nicknamed the 'Government of Caretakers,' to carry on till the general election, when the new rural voters could express their views. It achieved one useful measure, the Ashbourne Act, which advanced State loans to the Irish peasantry to purchase their land. Despite an election alliance with the Parnellites, the Conservatives failed to obtain a majority and Gladstone returned to power.



### **Gladstone's Third Ministry (1886): First Home Rule Bill**

Gladstone soon came to terms with the Parnellites. For some time the great Liberal statesman had been contemplating Home Rule for Ireland as the only remedy for Ireland's woes, and in 1886 he introduced his first Home Rule Bill with a masterly speech of over three hours. His henchman was the progressive thinker and writer, John Morley. The scheme involved the establishment of a separate Irish Parliament and government at Dublin, and Ireland was to lose her representation in the Parliament at Westminster. The imperial Parliament at Westminster was to retain control of foreign policy, defence, the armed forces, and tariffs; and Ireland was to contribute a share towards their cost. After long debate the Commons rejected the scheme.

Many objections had been raised. Were the Irish fit to govern themselves? What would happen to the Protestant minority in Ulster? Would Home Rule mean 'Rome Rule'? What would happen to imperial unity in face of such a precedent? Would the Irish submit to taxation without representation? In addition, the landed interests opposed the scheme on selfish grounds. What turned the scale was the ninety-three Liberal votes cast against the government. These came from the aristocratic section led by Lord Hartington, and even from Radicals like Joseph Chamberlain and John Bright, actuated by mixed motives such as the Ulster question and, in the case of Chamberlain, personal dislike of Parnell. In effect, Gladstone, like Peel in 1846, had split his party in two: those who supported him and those, soon known as Liberal Unionists, who opposed him. As with the Conservatives in 1846, so with the Liberals in 1886; the party was so shattered that, except for one short interlude, it was out of office for the next twenty years. A general election in 1886 returned the Conservatives with a large majority.



### QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. What were the main features of Gladstone's Irish problem? How did he attempt to deal with them from 1868 to 1886?
2. Outline the domestic reforms of Gladstone's ministries.
3. What were the main achievements of Disraeli?
4. Contrast the foreign and imperial policies of Disraeli and Gladstone.
5. Describe and account for British public opinion over (a) the Franco-German War (1870-1871), (b) the Bulgarian atrocities and the Eastern Question (1876-1878).



## CHAPTER XV

### UNIONISM IN CONTROL (1886-1905)

#### **Salisbury's Second Ministry (1886-1892)**

FOREIGN and imperial affairs occupied much attention towards the end of the century, and Salisbury was for the most part his own Foreign Secretary. During these years Cecil Rhodes and others were extending British power in Africa. The Queen's Golden Jubilee in 1887 attracted to London statesmen and picturesque native rulers from all parts of the world, and the opportunity was taken to hold the first Colonial Conference.

At home the government, true to the traditions of Disraeli and encouraged by the Liberal Unionists under Joseph Chamberlain, carried through several useful measures of reform. The most important of these was the County Councils Act of 1888, a logical corollary to the Reform Act of 1884. Local government in the counties had been allowed to remain so far in the hands of the Justices of the Peace or magistrates. These in general had carried out their duties efficiently, but they were the nominees of the Crown, and in an age of democracy were out of place. The new arrangement provided for elected county councils to take over most of the local government duties of the magistrates (roads and bridges, local finance, lunatic asylums, reformatory schools, and so on); but the justices were left with their judicial and licensing powers, and together with the county council shared the control of the county police through a Standing Joint Committee. About sixty towns of over 50,000 inhabitants were given county status, with the title of county boroughs. The whole London area, apart from the ancient City, was placed under one large London County Council. Another noteworthy reform of these years was to make elementary education completely free (1891).

Irish affairs continued to provide fireworks for the sensation-ally minded. Salisbury chose as his Irish Secretary his nephew, A. J. Balfour, a lanky, fragile-looking aristocrat whom his



opponents nicknamed the 'tiger-lily' and 'Daddy-Long-Legs.' But Balfour proceeded to rule Ireland with a rod of iron and soon became 'Bloody Balfour' to the Irish. In 1887 he passed the most stringent Crimes Act ever applied to Ireland. At the crucial moment the passage of this act was aided by a series of articles in *The Times* entitled "Parnellism and Crime." These set out to prove Parnell's support of agrarian crime in Ireland (of which there was still much going on) and printed a photograph of a letter wherein Parnell approved of the Phoenix Park murders. Two years later a court of inquiry showed that the letter was a forgery by a miserable wretch called Piggott, who immediately fled the country and committed suicide at Madrid. But Parnell was no sooner vindicated than he became involved in a divorce question (1890). His reputation was gone, and his followers broke into two parties. This strangest of all Irish leaders died in 1891. Balfour meanwhile, having subdued Ireland by coercion, passed another Land Purchase Act to help the Irish to buy their land.

### **Gladstone's Last Ministry (1892-1894) : Liberal Decline**

A general election placed Gladstone in power again, and the veteran statesman, now well over eighty, made his final attempt to pacify Ireland. In 1893 he introduced his second Home Rule Bill, differing from the first by allowing Ireland representation at Westminster as well as in her own Parliament. The Prime Minister's personal authority alone secured it a difficult passage through the Commons; in the Lords it was rejected by 419 to 41. Gladstone accepted defeat, but with an ill grace. In 1894 an important Local Government Act established rural and urban district councils to manage, mainly, matters of public health; the larger parishes were also allowed to elect parish councils for small local affairs, such as footpaths and charities.

Gladstone retired in 1894 and died four years later. The tributes of two political opponents testify to the respect he had won during sixty years of political life. Lord Salisbury described him as "a great Christian statesman," and Balfour



called him "the greatest member of the greatest deliberative assembly which so far the world has seen."

The Liberal party soon fell to bits. Lord Rosebery acted as Prime Minister 1894-1895, but he was not acceptable to many and quarrels rent the party. One achievement deserves mention—Harcourt's budget of 1894 which for the first time levied death duties, steeply graduated, upon real estate, *i.e.*, land and buildings. In carrying this proposal, which was hotly contested by the landowners, Harcourt insisted that "we are all Socialists now." At the first opportunity Rosebery resigned. The resulting election justified the action of the Lords over Home Rule by routing the Liberals and returning the Unionists (Conservatives and Liberal Unionists combined) with an overwhelming majority (1895).

### **Salisbury's Third Ministry (1895-1902)**

The Liberal Unionists under Joseph Chamberlain now joined the Conservatives, the resulting fusion being known simply as the Unionist party. Salisbury again acted as his own Foreign Minister, and Chamberlain somewhat surprisingly chose the office of Colonial Secretary, hitherto considered not quite in the first rank. But under him the office became of first importance, and Chamberlain was in many ways more than Salisbury the leading member of the government. The Diamond Jubilee of 1897 gave him the chance of presiding over another Colonial Conference; he helped to secure the Imperial Penny Post and the passage of the Australian Commonwealth Act of 1900; he made grants and loans of imperial money to the Crown Colonies to develop their agriculture, commerce, and public works; and he encouraged the study of tropical medicine, just then being revolutionized by the discovery of Sir Ronald Ross that malaria was due to the mosquito.

These years at the turn of the century were in fact crowded with imperial and foreign events of far-reaching importance. In 1895 a boundary dispute between British Guiana and Venezuela nearly led to war with the U.S.A., which claimed the right under the Monroe Doctrine of deciding the issue.



Lord Salisbury fortunately refused to be goaded into unwise recriminations. In Africa, Kitchener conquered the Sudan, and from 1899 to 1902 Britain was involved in the Boer War. In the new century British foreign policy changed from isolation to one of ententes and alliances. An alliance with Japan (1902) was followed by ententes with France and later Russia. The shadow of the Great War was beginning to fall across Europe.

At home an important Workmen's Compensation Act (1897) made the cost of accidents which befell workmen during their employment a regular charge upon profits. Two years later a Local Government Act established the London Metropolitan Boroughs to share with the L.C.C. the task of governing the capital.

In 1900 the government took advantage of the divisions in the Liberal party over the Boer War (a rising Welsh Radical, Lloyd George, distinguished himself as a pro-Boer) to hold an election. This 'khaki' election routed the Liberals; but it also returned for the first time a few members of the new Labour Party. For some time Labour and Socialist views had been making headway. In 1879 Henry George's *Progress and Poverty* advocated a tax upon the increased values of land arising from the development of towns and communications. In 1881 Hyndman founded the Social Democratic Federation, and three years later the Webbs and George Bernard Shaw commenced through the Fabian Society to educate the people in the principles of Socialism. Trade unionism was also affected by Socialism, especially as it spread to the unskilled classes. The London Dockers' Strike of 1889, organized by Tom Mann, Ben Tillett, and John Burns, demonstrated in a new way the solidarity of labour; funds poured in from all over the country and even from Australia to sustain the dockers in their demand for sixpence an hour. Their eventual victory justified these sacrifices. In 1893 the Independent Labour Party was founded by Keir Hardie, an ex-miner, but it was too intellectual to appeal to the average trade unionist. Hence the formation in 1900 of the Labour Party, drawing mass support from trade



unionism on the one hand and its more intellectual doctrines from many of the above-mentioned societies on the other. It soon had something definite to agitate about. In 1901 the judges in the Taff Vale case, concerning a railwaymen's strike in South Wales, decided that trade unions were financially liable for any wrongs committed by their officials and members. This was a grave threat to the men's funds, but the Unionist government refused to do anything about it.

### **Tariff Reform kills Unionism**

The Queen's death in 1901 grieved the whole nation. She had for long symbolized her age, with its solid respectability and material advancement, and under her the monarchy had been raised from its depths of a century before. Her successor, Edward VII, introduced a new air of gaiety into court life. In 1902 Salisbury handed over the premiership to his nephew Balfour, who signalized his first year of office by an important Education Act. The school boards of 1870 were abolished, and education was placed under the control of the county councils and county boroughs, with the larger boroughs and urban district councils possessing some powers over elementary education. The county authorities were empowered to extend facilities for technical education and to establish secondary schools, and by means of scholarships to erect a 'ladder' from the elementary school to the university. Religious controversy broke out once more over the proposal to subsidize Church schools out of the rates, and many Nonconformists 'passively resisted' by refusing to pay their rates. In 1903 the most important Irish Land Purchase Act ever passed (Wyndham's Act) set aside £100,000,000 to help the Irish peasantry to buy out their landlords, the peasantry to repay the British government through annuities. The British government also contributed a sum outright to facilitate the scheme, the net result of which was practically to solve the Irish land problem, although the peasants were still saddled with their annuities.

The closing years of Balfour's ministry witnessed the bitter



controversy over Tariff Reform. Chamberlain was the guiding spirit in this new attempt to undo the work of Peel and Gladstone and make Britain Protectionist once more. His proposals were twofold. First, British industry was to be protected by tariffs against foreign manufactures, a proposal made all the more plausible by the high foreign tariffs imposed against British goods. Secondly, the empire was to be knit together by a system of preference. Some of the colonies already granted preferences to British goods, and Chamberlain now proposed that we should grant preferences to theirs. Unfortunately for the success of the scheme this involved new taxes upon foreign raw materials and, worse still, upon food. These proposals split the Unionists into two groups and served to unite the Liberals, who were still suffering from their divisions over the Boer War. Chamberlain resigned from the government in 1903 to give himself a free hand; several Unionist free-traders followed suit. Balfour gave no definite lead to his party and in despair resigned in December, 1905. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman took over for the Liberals and in January, 1906, held an election. The rout of the Unionists was complete. The trade unions voted against the government which had acquiesced in the Taff Vale decision; the Nonconformists against the government which had passed the Education Act. The importation of cheap Chinese labour into South Africa to work the gold mines also discredited the Unionists. Above all, Britain was still Free Trade at heart, and the proposal to tax food raised all the old passions of the 'hungry forties.' "The Big Loaf versus the Little Loaf" was the Liberal election-cry. The nation chose the big loaf. Chamberlain was already broken in health and retired from public life.

### QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Outline the reforms in local government during the years 1886-1905.
2. Summarize the domestic legislation of the Unionists under Lord Salisbury and Balfour.



3. Describe the career of Joseph Chamberlain. Can he be charged with breaking the Liberal party in 1886 and the Unionist party in the years 1903-1906?

4. Write notes upon (a) the rise of the Labour party, (b) the settlement of the Irish land problem, (c) tariff reform.



## CHAPTER XVI

### LIBERAL REVIVAL AND REFORMS (1906-1914)

#### **Campbell-Bannerman's Ministry (1905-1908)**

THE new Liberal government was a strong team. Mr Asquith became Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Welsh Radical, Lloyd George, went to the Board of Trade. Sir Edward (later Lord) Grey was Foreign Secretary and Haldane Secretary for War. The first Labour member to achieve cabinet rank was John Burns, who became President of the Local Government Board. The election had returned fifty-three Labour members, including over twenty Trade Unionists, and these under James Ramsay MacDonald exerted a strong influence upon the government in the direction of radical reform.

One of Campbell-Bannerman's first acts (1906) was to grant self-government to the Boer republics annexed in 1902; this bold and generous action fully justified itself. In the same year a Trades Disputes Act reversed the Taff Vale decision; trade unions were placed in the privileged position of not being liable for damages arising from actions of their members or officials. In 1906 also a Workmen's Compensation Act extended the provisions of the act of 1897 to additional trades, and a Small Holdings Act of 1907 did something to implement the old election cry of "three acres and a cow" by enabling county councils to buy up land and let it out in small-holdings. The years 1906 to 1908 witnessed reforms on behalf of the children. Schools were allowed to provide cheap or free meals for poor children, school medical inspections were begun, and special courts were established to try juvenile offenders.

In 1907 and the years following, army reforms (shown necessary by the Boer War) were carried out by Haldane, who had been educated at Göttingen University and was well acquainted with the latest German methods. No attempt was made to build up a large army, but Britain's small army was completely overhauled. The territorial system was created, and the



Officers' Training Corps for schools and universities formed. Detailed arrangements were worked out for the speedy dispatch of a complete expeditionary force to wherever it might be needed. A general staff was created and the Committee of Imperial Defence, established a few years earlier under Balfour, was improved.

### **Asquith's Government (1908-1916) : The Pace quickens**

In 1908 Campbell-Bannerman retired and was succeeded by Asquith. The outstanding member of the government was Lloyd George, who took over Asquith's position of Chancellor of the Exchequer. Under his influence the pace of reform quickened. Winston Churchill succeeded Lloyd George at the Board of Trade.

The new government's first measure (1908) was the provision of Old Age Pensions on a non-contributory basis. Pensions of five shillings a week or less, according to other sources of income, were provided by the State to everyone over seventy. It was admittedly a small amount; but, like most of the Liberal reforms of these years, it was the first step towards the building up of a vast social service. The principle was being won of State-help as opposed to the old doctrine of *laissez-faire*. In 1909 two further steps were taken. First, a Trade Boards Act provided for the creation of trade boards composed of equal numbers of employers and employees with a neutral chairman, and these boards were empowered to fix wage rates in certain 'sweated' industries where conditions were exceptionally bad. At first only four trades were thus controlled, but later acts have considerably increased this number. Secondly, Labour Exchanges were established to provide means of contact between workers wanting jobs and employers wanting workers.

The thoughts of the trade-union world, however, were soon directed elsewhere by the Osborne case of 1909, when Mr Osborne, a railwayman, succeeded in preventing his trade union from furthering political objects out of funds subscribed for industrial purposes. This decision, upheld by the House of



Lords, meant that trade unions could not pay the election expenses or salaries of their parliamentary candidates.

### **The Struggle over the 'People's Budget' (1909-1910)**

In April, 1909, Lloyd George introduced his 'People's Budget.' Social reforms (as well as naval construction, which was fast increasing in competition with Germany) cost money; Lloyd George's budget was designed to raise this money and to wage, in its author's words, "implacable warfare against poverty and squalidness." Existing duties on spirits and tobacco were increased; but it was two new taxes that attracted most attention and excited controversy. A super-tax, *i.e.*, one over and above the ordinary income-tax, was to be levied on incomes of more than £3,000. Further, all land was to be valued and thereafter any increases in land values were to be heavily taxed. This taxation of unearned increments, recalling the doctrines of Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*, was welcomed by the Socialists; it was condemned as robbery by the propertied classes.

Not till November did the budget pass the Commons, and it was then immediately rejected by the Lords by 350 votes to 75. The Commons were indignant, for it was generally held that the Lords had no power to amend or reject a money bill. A bitter struggle ensued, first to pass the budget and then to curtail the powers of the Lords. In January, 1910, the government appealed to the country. It was returned, but with a much reduced majority. In fact it was now dependent upon Labour, and still more upon Irish Nationalist votes. The Lords gave way, and in April, 1910, exactly a year after its introduction, the budget became law; but the land-valuation and taxation proposals were cumbersome and have never been properly applied.

### **The Struggle over the Parliament Act (1910-1911)**

The Commons were now out for blood. Ever since Gladstone's days the Lords had obstructed one piece of Liberal legislation after another. The Labour party, sore over the



Osborne judgment, and the Irish Nationalists, with an eye upon Home Rule, supported the Liberals. In May, 1910, Edward VII was succeeded by George V, and, despite efforts to avoid confronting the new King with a crisis, no compromise could be reached. In December, 1910, the government again appealed to the country with the same result as in January, *i.e.*, a working Liberal majority only with Labour and Irish support. It was sufficient for its purpose, and when the King promised to create the necessary number of new peers if the Lords persisted in opposing the proposed act, the Lords gave way.

The resulting Parliament Act (1911) is one of the most important constitutional laws in our history. If the Speaker of the House of Commons certifies a bill to be a money bill, the Lords can neither reject nor amend it; after one month it becomes law. Other bills can be held up by the Lords for two years; but if passed during this time by the Commons in three successive sessions, they too become law. The maximum duration of Parliament was reduced from seven to five years. These terms still govern the relations between the Houses.

### **National Insurance Act (1911)**

An important Poor Law Commission in 1909 had recommended sweeping changes. Administration of the poor law, it said, should be transferred from the boards of guardians to the county authorities, and greater efforts should be made to *prevent* poverty arising from such causes as sickness and unemployment. The first recommendation had to wait twenty years, but the second was put into effect in 1911.

The National Insurance Act was the work of Lloyd George, based partly upon similar schemes established by Bismarck in Germany over twenty years before. Part I of the act dealt with health. Every week the worker was to contribute 4*d.*, his employer 3*d.*, and the State 2*d.* to build up a fund to support the worker during periods of ill-health. He would receive a weekly payment from the State and free medical attention from his 'panel' doctor. A noteworthy feature of the scheme was



that friendly societies and trade unions, which had much experience of this sort of work, were used to administer it. Opponents ridiculed it as grandmotherly, and many employers and employees objected to the contributions, but the 'Welsh wizard' sweetened the pill for the workers by labelling it "9d. for 4d." No one can doubt the general good results of the scheme, both in improving health and preventing destitution. Part II of the act dealt with unemployment. It affected a smaller number of workers, but otherwise was based on the same principles, *i.e.*, worker, employer, and State contributed towards a fund to provide benefits during periods of temporary unemployment.

### **Labour Troubles and Legislation (1911-1913)**

In 1911 the Commons did something to ease the effects of the Osborne judgment by voting M.P.'s a salary of £400 a year. In 1912 the Shop Hours Act prescribed a half-day's holiday for shop assistants. In 1913 a Trade Union Act settled the vexed question of trade unions supporting political objects. They were allowed to establish a separate political fund if a majority of members wished to do so; but any members who wished to could contract out of subscribing towards it, and there was to be no discrimination used against them.

The years preceding the Great War, when the international atmosphere was charged with the approaching storm, was a time of much industrial unrest. Dockers, transport-workers, railwaymen, and miners engaged in successive strikes which threatened to paralyse the nation's life, and the government had to step in to maintain order and help to compose differences. In 1912 a Miners' Minimum Wages Act regulated wages in the mining industry and marked a further departure from *laissez-faire*. Nor were labour disputes the only troubles of these years. The Irish question brought the country to the verge of civil war, and the militant suffragettes were resorting to violence to win votes for women.



### **The Third Home Rule Bill (1912-1914)**

Since the two elections of 1910 the Liberals had been dependent upon the Irish Nationalist party under John Redmond, and in 1912 Asquith introduced the third Home Rule Bill to meet their demands. The bill allowed Ireland to control purely Irish affairs and to send members to Westminster to help to manage imperial matters. Opposition immediately flared up in Protestant Ulster, where Sir Edward Carson organized a Volunteer Force to resist Catholic rule. He received wide support in England. The Conservative leader, Bonar Law, gave his blessing to Carson's resistance; the Lords rejected the bill; and the British army in Ireland, stationed at the Curragh, was in danger of revolt if ordered to coerce Ulster. Asquith persisted in his scheme, intent on by-passing the opposition of the Lords by means of the Parliament Act; but he never made up his mind whether to coerce Ulster or not and adopted an attitude of "wait and see." On the eve of the Great War a conference of all parties interested was held at Buckingham Palace, but it achieved nothing; the Irish wanted Ulster, but Ulster did not want the Irish. In September, 1914, the bill became law under the Parliament Act; but the country was already at war and by general agreement the enforcement of the act was postponed.

### **Women's Rights and the Suffragette Movement**

'Votes for women' was only part of a larger movement to obtain equality with men in all spheres of life. Early Victorian conventions regarded women as fit only for ornamenting the drawing-room or working in the kitchen, according to their social class. Florence Nightingale was one of the first to flout convention.

The second half of the nineteenth century saw the growing emancipation of women, especially in the provision of educational opportunities. In 1848-1849 the Christian Socialists, Charles Kingsley and Frederick Maurice, founded Queen's College and Bedford College, London. Among the first pupils



at the former were the famous Miss Buss and Miss Beale. In 1850 Miss Buss established the North London Collegiate School for Girls, which twenty years later she handed over to trustees who became the original of the present Girls' Public Day School Trust. Miss Beale became head mistress in 1858 of the Chelten-



#### THE MILITANT SUFFRAGIST

After long and futile efforts to light a fire for her tea-kettle: "And to think that only yesterday I burnt two pavilions and a Church!"

A cartoon by Leo Cheney

Reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of *Punch*

ham Ladies' College which had been founded four years earlier. These two pioneers, the one in day-school and the other in boarding-school education, so devoted their lives to the cause of education that later generations of pupils, not always perhaps so single-minded, have commemorated them in the famous rhyme:

Miss Buss and Miss Beale  
Cupid's darts do not feel.  
How different from us  
Miss Beale and Miss Buss!



Between 1870 and 1880 Girton and Newnham Colleges at Cambridge and Lady Margaret Hall and Somerville College at Oxford were founded for women students. In 1878 London and in 1880 Manchester, Liverpool, and Leeds gave women complete equality in obtaining degrees and prizes and sharing in the government of the universities. Oxford and Cambridge followed slowly and in stages, allowing women first to attend lectures and take examinations without obtaining degrees, and finally, when degrees were granted, denying women (in the case of Cambridge) the right to share in university government.

Political emancipation followed a long way behind, most men (and indeed many women) agreeing with the Queen that "We women are not made for governing." A notable exception was John Stuart Mill, who in his writings and speeches of the 'fifties and 'sixties advocated votes for women. In 1882 the Married Women's Property Act ended the injustice by which, on her marriage, a woman's property passed under her husband's control. Women obtained the vote first in local government; thus the County Councils Act of 1888 granted women's suffrage. The District Councils Act of 1894 not only gave women the vote, but allowed them to be elected to the new councils, a precedent which in 1907 was extended to county and borough councils. But the Parliamentary vote was the crux of the matter. Numerous women's suffrage societies existed by 1900 and their cause was voiced by Mrs Millicent Fawcett. In 1903 Mrs Pankhurst, ably seconded by her two daughters Christabel and Sylvia, founded the Women's Social and Political Union to press the cause of women's suffrage by every means, legal or illegal, they could devise. For the next ten years the 'militant' suffragettes attracted attention by all kinds of acts; they heckled speakers, chained themselves to railings, fired houses and pillar-boxes, and one even committed suicide by throwing herself in front of the King's horse at the Derby. When imprisoned they went on hunger-strike and had to be forcibly fed till the government in 1913 passed a 'Cat and Mouse' Act which allowed hunger-strikers to be released and



later to be imprisoned again. The constitutional suffragettes disapproved of these methods, which in all probability delayed the very cause they were intended to further. The government was divided, Lloyd George being in favour of women's suffrage, and Asquith against. Then came the war. The suffragettes immediately called off their agitation, and women of all views and classes co-operated with men in the larger task confronting the nation.

In 1918 the Representation of the People Act gave votes to women over thirty and effected a large redistribution of seats. A further act allowed women to be elected, and in 1919 Lady Astor became the first woman to take her seat as a Member of Parliament. In 1928 women were given the vote on the same terms as men, whom, on the electoral roll, they have ever since outnumbered.

### QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Summarize the labour and social legislation during the years 1906-1914.
2. Describe the struggle between the House of Commons and the Lords (1909-1911).
3. Write notes upon: (a) Haldane's army reforms, (b) the Irish Home Rule Bill (1912-1914), (c) the Women's Suffrage movement.



## CHAPTER XVII

### FROM 'SPLENDID ISOLATION' TO ARMAGEDDON: FOREIGN POLICY (1890-1914)

#### **Principles of British Foreign Policy**

BRITAIN, as an island, needs a strong navy to defend her coasts, just as a land-power requires a strong army to guard its frontiers. In Britain's case this need is reinforced by two other factors: the necessity of protecting, first, a vast and widely scattered overseas empire; and second, the overseas trade upon which her economic life depends. Linked with sea-power is the possession of strategic points like Gibraltar, Malta, or Singapore to serve as bases, and the need, too, for neutralizing a country like Belgium, whose coastline faces Britain. In general Britain has not been interested in continental affairs for their own sake, and her army has always been very small judged by European standards. None the less, it has always been part of her policy to prevent any single nation from dominating the Continent and thus upsetting the balance of power. Thus Britain has entered at different times into European alliances to prevent Louis XIV, Napoleon, or Kaiser William II from becoming master of Europe. In short, British policy has aimed at preventing any nation from challenging Britain's naval superiority, from threatening her commercial and imperial interests, or from dominating the Continent.

During the period under review her chief foreign ministers were Lord Salisbury, Lord Lansdowne (who acted for the Unionists from 1900 to 1905), and Sir Edward Grey, the Liberal minister from 1905 to 1914.

#### **'Splendid Isolation'**

At the end of the nineteenth century Britain stood alone in what she termed 'splendid isolation.' Germany, Austria, and Italy had formed the Triple Alliance, Russia and France had replied with the Dual Alliance. Britain remained aloof—a fact



easily explained if we examine her relations with the three most powerful continental nations : France, Russia, and Germany.

In 1882 France had backed out of the Dual Control established over Egypt and had allowed Britain to suppress Egyptian nationalism and occupy Egypt unaided. France had immediately regretted her withdrawal, and for the next twenty years viewed with hostility the continued British occupation and the rule in Egypt of Lord Cromer. Britain in truth protested that her occupation was temporary, but made no signs of withdrawing. Bismarck, in his efforts to isolate France, promoted Anglo-French rivalry over Egypt. Closely connected with Egypt was the Sudan, evacuated by Britain since Gordon's disaster in 1885. Ten years later Britain began serious preparations for the reconquest of the Sudan, which, controlling as it did the upper waters of the Nile, was vital to Egypt's prosperity. In 1898 Kitchener won the battle of Omdurman, and the Sudan was subjugated. But for whom, for Britain or France? For in the same year a French military explorer, Marchand, struck across Africa from the French Congo and hoisted the French flag at Fashoda, south of Khartoum. When Kitchener insisted upon a French withdrawal, war seemed imminent. France saved the situation by backing out, but she remained sore. Smaller disputes over such matters as fishing-rights off Newfoundland and the exact frontiers of some of the French African colonies inflamed this soreness.

The sprawling Russian giant threatened British interests at many points. There was the century-old fear that she would inherit the Turkish empire and from Constantinople dominate the eastern Mediterranean. In the Middle East she had expanded through Turkestan to Persia and Afghanistan. Persia was valuable to Britain commercially, Afghanistan guarded the north-west approaches to India. In 1885 Gladstone had acted with unwonted vigour when Russia crossed the frontier of Afghanistan at Penjdeh. "Thus far and no farther," was the warning he gave. But the Russian giant was not yet disposed of; turning on its side it reared its head on the far Pacific, and the shadow of its mighty hand fell across China. Russia



in 1860 had reached Vladivostock. In the 1890's the Trans-Siberian Railway was built. In 1894-1895 Japan, by adopting western methods, defeated China, but was deprived of her spoils by Russia, backed by France and Germany. In 1898 on various pretexts Russia obtained Port Arthur (which Japan was to have had three years before!), Germany Kiaochow, and Britain Wei-Hai-Wei. The century closed with Japan smarting under Russia's insults, with Britain alarmed at this new Russian threat in an inconveniently distant part of the world, and with China, through the Boxer rebellion, trying to expel all foreigners, no matter what their label.

It would be true to say that in the 1890's there was more chance of Britain's linking up with Germany than with France or Russia. Generally speaking, Germany had obtained her African and Pacific colonies in 1884-1885 without seriously threatening British interests. In 1884 an international conference at Berlin had solved (on paper) many problems of African colonization and government. In 1890 Salisbury transferred Heligoland to Germany, who in return recognized British protection over Zanzibar. The new Kaiser, William II, who ascended the throne in 1888, was a grandson of Queen Victoria, and the latter, with memories of the Prince Consort, was friendly disposed towards Germany. From 1890 to 1900 many attempts were made from one side or the other to bring the two countries into closer agreement, but they came to nothing. Before the century closed signs of disagreement had appeared. Most important, the Kaiser had begun a programme of naval expansion designed to make Germany a strong sea- as well as land-power. In 1895 the opening of the Kiel Canal increased the effective strength of the German navy by facilitating communications between the Baltic and the North Sea. In 1897 Admiral von Tirpitz was placed in charge of the German navy and continued in charge till the Great War. The two men, Tirpitz and the Kaiser—the one dominated by naval ambitions, the other moody and impulsive and influenced by dreams of world conquest—were the biggest personal obstacles in the way of any Anglo-German understanding after 1900. Navy laws in



1898 and 1900 laid down large German building programmes. At the same time the Kaiser was busy cultivating the friendship of Turkey. Soon after his accession he visited the Sultan in person and posed as the champion of the Moslems. Britain had no objection to that, for she too wanted a strong Turkey to withstand Russian influence; but when Germany obtained concessions for building a railway from Constantinople to Bagdad to link up with the Berlin-Constantinople line, Britain doubted the desirability of German flirtations with Turkey. The projected Berlin to Bagdad railway threatened to by-pass the Suez Canal and give Germany an easy route to Persia and thus maybe to India. In 1896, moreover, the Kaiser interfered, unwarrantably so it seemed to Britain, in the affairs of South Africa. Dr Jameson had ineffectively raided the Boer Republic of the Transvaal, whereupon the Kaiser sent a telegram to the Boer President Kruger congratulating him on maintaining his independence and plainly hinting that in Germany he had a ready friend. Indeed, German warships were moved to Delagoa Bay, but the firm attitude of Portugal prevented any hostile developments.

### **The Dangers of Isolation**

Britain's isolation had obvious dangers. In 1895 war with the U.S.A. had threatened over the Venezuela and British Guiana boundary dispute; in 1898 war with France over Fashoda; German naval expansion and Russian moves in the Far East threatened vital interests. What if the two armed camps co-operated for the purpose of attacking Britain? This danger was shown during the Boer War (1899-1902) when Britain incurred widespread unpopularity for her attack upon the Boer republics. The French press in particular attacked Britain and printed cheap caricatures of the royal family. The Kaiser adopted on the whole an attitude of correct neutrality, but anti-British feeling was strong in Germany. Possibly the British navy in the background alone prevented intervention.



### **Abandonment of 'Splendid Isolation'**

Already in 1898 Britain had improved Anglo-American relations by lending moral support to the U.S.A. in her Spanish war and her seizure of the Philippines. A few years later Britain renounced certain long-standing treaty rights to allow the U.S.A. to build the Panama Canal, which was completed in 1914.

At home new leaders appeared to guide Britain from the solitary paths of isolation. In 1900 Lansdowne took over the Foreign Office from Salisbury; in 1901 the somewhat pro-German Victoria was succeeded by Edward VII, whose geniality and goodwill, expressed in his frequent visits to France, soon improved Anglo-French relations.

Britain's first and most definite step was in the Far East, where in 1902 she concluded an alliance with Japan. In the event of war between one party and a single enemy, the other party promised to observe benevolent neutrality. If two powers joined to attack one party, then the other promised definite aid. By this means Britain hoped to check the growing power of Russia and obtain the assistance of the Japanese fleet in Far Eastern waters. The result of this alliance was seen in 1904-1905 when Japan attacked and defeated Russia, the latter failing to obtain help from her ally France. Japan obtained Port Arthur from Russia and control of the Korea peninsula and thus began her process of dismembering China.

### **Anglo-French Entente (1904) and Algeciras (1906)**

In 1904 Lansdowne, aided by Edward VII's popularity in France, concluded an entente with France. This was a settlement of outstanding differences entailing no military or naval obligations on either side. Various long-standing disputes over the Newfoundland fishing-rights, the New Hebrides, and boundary questions in West Africa and Siam were settled; but the most important points related to Egypt and Morocco. Broadly speaking, France buried her objections to the continued British occupation of Egypt, and Britain promised to support France in her designs upon Morocco.



The most important parts of this entente were kept secret, but Germany suspected their existence and immediately put them to the test. In 1905 the Kaiser landed from his yacht at Tangier and made a speech emphasizing the independence of Morocco. He then demanded a conference to examine the whole question of Morocco. The conference met at Algeciras in 1906—a victory, so far, for Germany. But Germany was unsupported at the conference; and the Act of Algeciras, although somewhat vague (as many diplomatic documents, not always unintentionally, are), gave France the right of policing Morocco and was therefore really a victory for the entente.

### **Anglo-Russian Entente (1907) and the Bosnian Crisis (1908)**

A similar settlement between Britain and Russia was a logical corollary to the entente between Britain and France, Russia's ally. Britain had by now definitely refused to join Germany in the Berlin to Bagdad railway scheme, a project which both Russia and Britain viewed askance, and so Britain's action helped to bring the two countries together. Since Russia's defeat by Japan in 1905 Britain also had less reason to fear Russia in the Far East. The Anglo-Russian entente of 1907 guaranteed the integrity of Tibet and Afghanistan, the latter in particular being excluded from Russian influence. The most important provision concerned Persia, which was divided into three spheres of influence, one open to Russian penetration, one to British, and the third, in between, a kind of 'no man's land.' A cartoon expressed the general feeling of the country when Russia's Persian intrigues continued; Sir Edward Grey was shown caressed by the Russian bear and anxiously wondering whether the hug of affection would change to a hug of death.

The line-up of the six great European powers was now complete, and in 1908 was subjected to a severe strain. Austria, given the right of protecting Bosnia-Herzegovina under the Treaty of Berlin, 1878, announced her definite annexation of these Slavonic provinces. Russia, of course, was furious and



Britain protested against this one-sided breach of an international treaty. But Germany backed up her ally, Austria, and the Triple Entente had to accept the new situation. Matters were not improved by the Kaiser's interview with the *Daily Telegraph*, in which he asserted that only his own personal influence held the anti-British feelings of Germany in check, and by a speech in which he compared Germany to a knight in shining armour.

### **Anglo-German Relations (1900-1914)**

Since the failure of the attempts round about 1900 to bring about closer relations between Britain and Germany, the two countries had drifted farther apart. Britain viewed the Berlin to Bagdad railway scheme with suspicion; Germany's growing industrial and commercial expansion threatened British economic interests; Germany complained that the ententes were an attempt to encircle her and disregarded Britain's insistence that they were nothing more than settlements of differences and that it was open to Germany to conclude a similar entente if she so desired. But what attracted most attention and promoted most ill-feeling was the competition between the two countries in naval construction.

Ever since Tirpitz had assumed control of the German navy he had made no secret of his intention of raising Germany to the rank of a first-class naval power. Successive navy laws laid down large building programmes. In 1906 Britain launched a new type of battleship, the *Dreadnought*, whose powerful armaments rendered all previous battleships obsolete. Thereafter naval rivalry centred round the building of these dreadnoughts, Britain aiming in general to build two to every one of Germany's. Britain's suggestion at the Second Hague Conference (1907) of a halt in this armaments race was coldly received by Germany, which replied in 1908 with a bigger programme than ever. The British public's well-founded suspicion that the government, in the interests of economy, was intending to cut down Britain's building of dreadnoughts led to the popular cry (1909) "We want eight and we won't wait."



The expense of this armaments race, together with social reforms, lay behind Lloyd George's 'People's Budget' of 1909. In 1912 Haldane, who had many German connexions through his German education, was sent to Germany to improve relations, but achieved nothing, mainly, as he confessed, owing to the unyielding attitude of Tirpitz. A similar result attended Winston Churchill's suggestion of a 'naval holiday' in the following year.

Two important developments heralded the coming storm. Britain began to construct her east coast naval bases at Scapa Flow and Rosyth, and in 1912 undertook responsibility for guarding the North Sea and the English Channel, thus allowing France to concentrate her own warships in the Mediterranean. This arrangement has been much criticized in view of the British government's continued insistence that there was still no legal obligation on Britain's part to go to the help of France in the event of war.

### **The Agadir Crisis (1911)**

Germany had never reconciled herself to the French penetration of Morocco, and when French troops occupied Fez in 1911 Germany complained that the Act of Algeciras had been broken. To add force to her protest Germany sent the gunboat *Panther* to Agadir on the Atlantic coast of Morocco, and demanded a partition of Morocco. Germany's threatened seizure of an important strategic point on the Atlantic roused strong feeling in Britain, and Lloyd George at the Mansion House made a vigorous protest. Peace hung in the balance for several months, but eventually Germany recognized the French protectorate over Morocco in return for part of the French Congo.

### **The Great War (1914)**

The Great War commenced in the Balkans, where since the Bosnian crisis of 1908 Russia and Serbia had nursed resentment against Austria. In 1912-1913 there took place two Balkan wars, the first when Serbia, Greece, and Bulgaria united to



drive the Turks from their remaining possessions in Europe, and the second when the victorious countries fell out among themselves and Serbia, Greece, and Roumania attacked Bulgaria. The net result was that Turkey lost most of her European possessions, a new state, Albania, was created, and an enlarged Serbia emerged flushed with victory. Grey's policy had been to localize the wars and end them as speedily as possible.

Then on June 28, 1914, the fateful incident occurred. The Austrian Archduke Ferdinand and his wife were murdered by Serbian conspirators at Serajevo, the capital of Bosnia. The Austrian government, with no real evidence, accused the Serbian government of complicity and presented a sharp ultimatum. Despite Serbia's acceptance of most of the points, Austria declared war on July 28. Germany, who at this critical juncture could have exercised a restraining influence over her ally, failed to do so, although it was quite clear that the war would not be confined to Austria and Serbia. In fact Russia immediately mobilized to help Serbia, whereupon Germany declared war upon her (August 1). France was bound by treaty-ties to help Russia and when she refused to renounce her obligations, Germany declared war upon her (August 3).

There remained Britain. Grey had worked hard to obtain an international conference, but his plans fell on deaf ears. Britain had no legal obligation to help France or Russia, and Grey refused to pledge British support, although it was difficult to see how Britain could stand aside. Grey, however, based Britain's next step upon the fate of Belgium. He required from France and Germany assurances to respect Belgian neutrality as guaranteed by the treaty of 1839. France gave them. Germany's reply was to operate the plan which she had long ago prepared for such an emergency; she marched straight into Belgium and declared the treaty a mere 'scrap of paper.' Whereupon (August 4) Britain declared war.

The world was thus plunged into the horrors of war. "The lamps are going out all over Europe. We shall not see them lit again in our lifetime," was Grey's comment.



## QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. What questions separated Britain from France and Russia before the conclusion of the ententes?
2. Explain why and how Britain abandoned her policy of 'splendid isolation.'
3. Describe the relations between Britain and Germany during the years 1890-1914.
4. What can be said for and against Britain's policy of concluding ententes as distinct from definite alliances?



# PART V

## NINETEENTH- AND TWENTIETH-CENTURY DEVELOPMENTS

### CHAPTER XVIII

#### THE BRITISH EMPIRE

#### **The Second British Empire**

THE first British Empire, consisting largely of the thirteen American colonies, had been governed in accordance with mercantilist principles, whereby overseas possessions were closely regulated for the benefit of the mother-country. The revolt of the American colonies and the growth of *laissez-faire* doctrines produced a new view towards the colonies. "Let them go their own way," became the prevalent attitude, and that way, it was widely believed, would lead to their eventual separation from the mother-country. Hence a general neglect by statesmen of colonial affairs, although missionaries and anti-slavery agitators found them useful fields of activity. Even Disraeli, as late as 1852, petulantly referred to "those wretched colonies" which hung "like a millstone round our necks." Already, however, a new and saner outlook was growing up midway between the extremes of old-fashioned mercantilism and new-fashioned indifference.

The new view was first expressed by a small group of Benthamite Whig-Radicals, led by Edward Gibbon Wakefield. Colonies, he maintained, should play a worthy part in solving the economic and social ills of the time. To regard Australia, for instance, as a dumping-ground for criminals was unworthy both of Australia and Britain. Wakefield advocated instead properly organized schemes of emigration. Moreover, the colonies should be allowed to govern themselves free from the red tape interference of 'Mr Mother-Country.' While Wake-



field's ideas on emigration found most expression in Australia and New Zealand, his views on colonial self-government were first applied to Canada under the influence of Lord Durham and Charles Buller. These men supplied the ideas behind the second British Empire which grew up after 1815.

### (1) CANADA

#### **Racial and Political Problems (1763-1837)**

The Canada acquired by Britain in 1763 consisted mainly of some 65,000 French settlers along the banks of the St Lawrence. In 1774 the British government, on the advice of Sir Guy Carleton, one of the earliest Canadian governors, passed the Quebec Act allowing the French to retain their Catholic religion and many of their French-Canadian laws and customs. They were not, however, granted a parliament.

The American War of Independence proved the wisdom of the Quebec Act, as the French Canadians remained loyal to Britain. The war, however, precipitated another problem which was bound to arise in any case. About 40,000 United Empire Loyalists crossed from the U.S.A. to Canada, settling in Nova Scotia and more particularly in the upper parts of the St Lawrence north of Lake Ontario. The Younger Pitt's Canada Act 1791 (see *p.* 82) attempted to solve the new problem by dividing Canada into two provinces, Upper Canada (later Ontario, and mainly British) and Lower Canada (later Quebec, and mainly French). Each province could elect its own representative assembly or parliament with power over legislation and taxation; but the lieutenant-governor in each province, who was himself chosen by the mother-country, could choose his own council of ministers without reference to the wishes of the elected parliament. This system of 'representative' government was a step forward at the time, but led to trouble later on.

During the war with the U.S.A. (1812-1814) Canada again remained loyal to the mother-country and vigorously countered attacks upon its territory by land and across the Great Lakes.



In 1817-1818 Castlereagh agreed with the U.S.A. to disarm the Great Lakes and the land frontier, the latter being extended as far as the Rockies along the forty-ninth parallel.

During the next twenty years many of the canals connected with the Great-Lakes system were constructed, and Canada received a steady flow of immigrants from the British Isles, especially from Scotland. Pitt's arrangements of 1791 were now breaking down. The division of Canada into two provinces tended to perpetuate racial differences. Disputes occurred between the elected assemblies on the one hand and the governors and ministers on the other hand. This was complicated in Lower Canada by the fact that the representatives were mainly French and the governor and his ministers British. In Upper Canada a small group of families monopolized power to the exclusion of later immigrants. The privileged position of the Anglican Church was another cause of friction, as under Pitt's act a large acreage of rich land, known as 'clergy reserves,' had till 1834 been allotted to it. The result was that in 1837, the year of Victoria's accession, two rebellions broke out, one in Lower Canada under Papineau, the other in Upper Canada under Mackenzie. They were easily suppressed, but Melbourne's government decided to send out Lord Durham to report upon the situation.

### **Lord Durham's Report (1839)**

Lord Durham spent five months in Canada (May to November 1838) and was accompanied by his secretary, Charles Buller, and by Wakefield. His visit was marred by unfortunate high-handedness towards the ex-rebels, some of whom he unconstitutionally deported to Bermuda. For this he was recalled and deserted by Melbourne, and the bitter attacks upon him probably hastened his death in 1840. But he had already presented his famous Report to Parliament.

Durham recommended two important changes. First, that the two provinces should be united; this, he hoped, would help to make British and French forget their differences, and would soon lead to an English-speaking majority in the new Canada.



Secondly, that Canada should be granted responsible, as distinct from mere representative, government, *i.e.*, the Governor should choose his ministers from the majority-party in the Canadian Parliament, so that the cabinet, as in the mother-country, would be *responsible* to the elected representatives. It is true that Durham recommended that questions like foreign affairs and tariffs on foreign trade should be reserved to the Governor, but even so his report was a startling advance upon the generally accepted ideas of his age. It can justly be regarded as the basis of dominion self-government and the beginning of that process which has transformed the British Empire into the British Commonwealth.

An Act of Union in 1840 carried out Durham's first recommendation. His second was adopted in a typically British fashion, when Lord Elgin (Durham's son-in-law), who was Governor from 1847 to 1854, began of his own accord the practice of choosing his ministers from the majority in the elected assembly. This 'convention' once begun was later continued.

### **The Dominion of Canada (1867)**

In 1842 a boundary dispute between Maine and Canada was settled by the Ashburton Treaty, and four years later the Oregon Treaty extended the forty-ninth parallel as the boundary west of the Rockies. In 1859 an important step was taken when Canada imposed tariffs on British as well as foreign goods.

The end of the American Civil War in 1865 stimulated the movement towards closer union on the part of the various Canadian colonies, as certain voices were raised in the U.S.A. to urge that the conquest of Canada was the natural sequel to the conquest of the South. The result was the British North America Act of 1867. Four colonies—Quebec, Ontario (which were now made separate again), Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick—agreed to form a federation under a Dominion Parliament of two houses, a Senate appointed for life and a House of Commons elected for five years. The Governor-



General representing the British monarchy was to choose his ministers according to the wishes of the Canadian Parliament. The first Dominion Prime Minister was Sir John Macdonald, who had been the foremost advocate of federation. Each province retained power over local matters and had its own legislative assembly. Canada was thus the pioneer in colonial federation as she had been in responsible government.

In 1869 the Hudson's Bay Company surrendered to the Dominion its governing-rights over its vast undefined north-western territories, out of which the prairie provinces were in course of time formed. Manitoba joined the Dominion in 1870, British Columbia in 1871, Prince Edward Island in 1873, and Alberta and Saskatchewan in 1905. Newfoundland has never joined the Dominion.

Development across the continent, which has made Canada into one of the great wheat-producing areas of the world, was aided by the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway (1881-1885). Eastern Canada has also developed important industries of her own, and the population of the Dominion now stands at over eleven millions, of whom about three millions are of French descent.

## (2) AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

### **Australia**

Parts of Australia (from 'Terra Australis,' the land of the south) and New Zealand were dimly known to seventeenth-century Dutch sailors like Tasman; but it is not till the end of the eighteenth century that their history really begins. In 1769 Captain James Cook, who ten years earlier had served in Wolfe's Quebec expedition, discovered New Zealand while on a scientific and exploratory voyage in the *Endeavour*. In the following year he explored the east coast of Australia, naming part of it New South Wales from its similarity to South Wales. The abundant vegetation of one spot likewise prompted the name of Botany Bay. Cook made two other voyages before his death.



In 1788 Captain Arthur Phillips established the first convict settlement, Australia conveniently filling the gap caused by the loss of America. For half a century convicts supplied a large part of Australia's population. In those days of severe penalties for political and relatively minor offences convicts were not necessarily the dregs of society; but the conditions under which they lived were degrading, and penal settlements were obviously an unsatisfactory way of peopling a new continent. About 1800 Captain Macarthur introduced merino sheep into Australia; this, together with the discovery of the rich pasture lands beyond the Blue Mountains in 1813, marked the beginning of Australia's eventual development into the biggest wool-producing country in the world. Exploration led to settlements outside New South Wales: Tasmania in 1803, Queensland in 1825, Western Australia in 1829, South Australia (with its capital Adelaide named after William IV's queen) in 1836, although most of these settlements were not recognized as separate colonies till some years later. Victoria was settled in 1835, but its name dates from after Victoria's accession in 1837, and its capital Melbourne recalls her first Prime Minister.

In the 1830's Edward Gibbon Wakefield applied his emigration ideas to South Australia, where a famous colonial administrator, Sir George Grey, was a very successful Governor during the years 1841 to 1845. After 1840 convicts were no longer deported to New South Wales, and later the practice ceased also with the other penal colonies of Tasmania and Western Australia.

In 1851 gold was discovered at Bathurst and soon at Ballarat and Bendigo. A gold rush ensued and Australia's population increased by leaps and bounds. In 1855 most of the Australian colonies were granted constitutions allowing them responsible self-government similar to that of Canada. Towards the end of the century community of interest, inter-state migrations, and the desire to pursue a common 'White Australia' policy by excluding coloured races promoted a movement for federation. The Australian Commonwealth Act (1900) joined the mainland states and Tasmania together under one Parliament consisting



of a Senate and a House of Representatives. The powers of the Commonwealth government were confined to questions of general importance such as trade policy and defence; any powers not so transferred remained in the hands of the separate states. This is a contrary arrangement to that adopted in Canada, and has resulted in the Australian states wielding greater powers than their Canadian counterparts.

Modern Australia has been noted for its strong Labour Party, which is the creation of the trade unions, and for its labour and social legislation designed to maintain a high standard of life. Its present population is about seven millions.

### **New Zealand**

For sixty years after Cook's discovery the chief visitors to New Zealand were whalers, escaped convicts, and missionaries. Then in 1837 Wakefield founded the New Zealand Association, and in 1839 a band of emigrants left Britain under Wakefield's brother. They landed in 1840 and soon fell foul of the Maoris of North Island, an intelligent and powerful native race numbering 100,000. Disputes over land questions, and the British government's knowledge that France was about to seize New Zealand led to the Treaty of Waitangi (1840) between the Governor of New South Wales and the Maori chiefs. By this the Maoris acknowledged British sovereignty, and the British government promised henceforth to purchase all lands taken over from the Maoris. This treaty marked the definite establishment of British rule in New Zealand. Land disputes still continued and led to a Maori War in 1844-1845 and to the appointment of Sir George Grey as Governor (1845-1853). Grey won the confidence of the Maoris by learning their language, respecting their rights, and taking steps to preserve their culture. In 1853 he gave New Zealand its first definite constitution. He then left to become Governor of Cape Colony, but fresh disputes with the Maoris led to his return to New Zealand for a second term of office (1861-1867). After a period in Britain, where he advocated state-aided emigration to the colonies, Grey returned to New Zealand and acted as Prime



Minister from 1877 to 1879. From 1893 to 1906 New Zealand under Richard Seddon became the pioneer in social legislation, establishing old age pensions, votes for women, and state insurance long before the mother-country. In 1900 New Zealand decided not to join the Australian Commonwealth; seven years later its separate dominion status was definitely recognized. Its small population (now about one and a half million) has always been noted for its loyalty to the mother-country, which it supplies with excellent mutton and dairy produce.

### (3) SOUTH AFRICA

#### **The Dutch in South Africa**

In 1652 a squadron of three ships of the Dutch East India Company cast anchor in Table Bay. This was the beginning of Cape Town, which arose as a port of call where ships to the east could replenish their supplies of water and fresh vegetables. During the Napoleonic Wars Britain seized Cape Colony and other Dutch possessions to prevent them from falling into French hands, and in 1815 retained most of these possessions (except Java) on paying Holland £6,000,000 as compensation.

Soon British immigrants appeared in Cape Colony, a notable settlement being that of 1820, when 4,000 settlers were sent out as part of a scheme to relieve post-war distress. Thereafter the history of South Africa can only be understood by remembering its three main groups of inhabitants: the British, the Dutch Boers or farmers, and the native races. The latter included many types, chief of whom were the Hottentots and Bantu tribes like the Zulus; sometimes the word 'Kaffir,' which means 'unbeliever,' was applied to the native races.

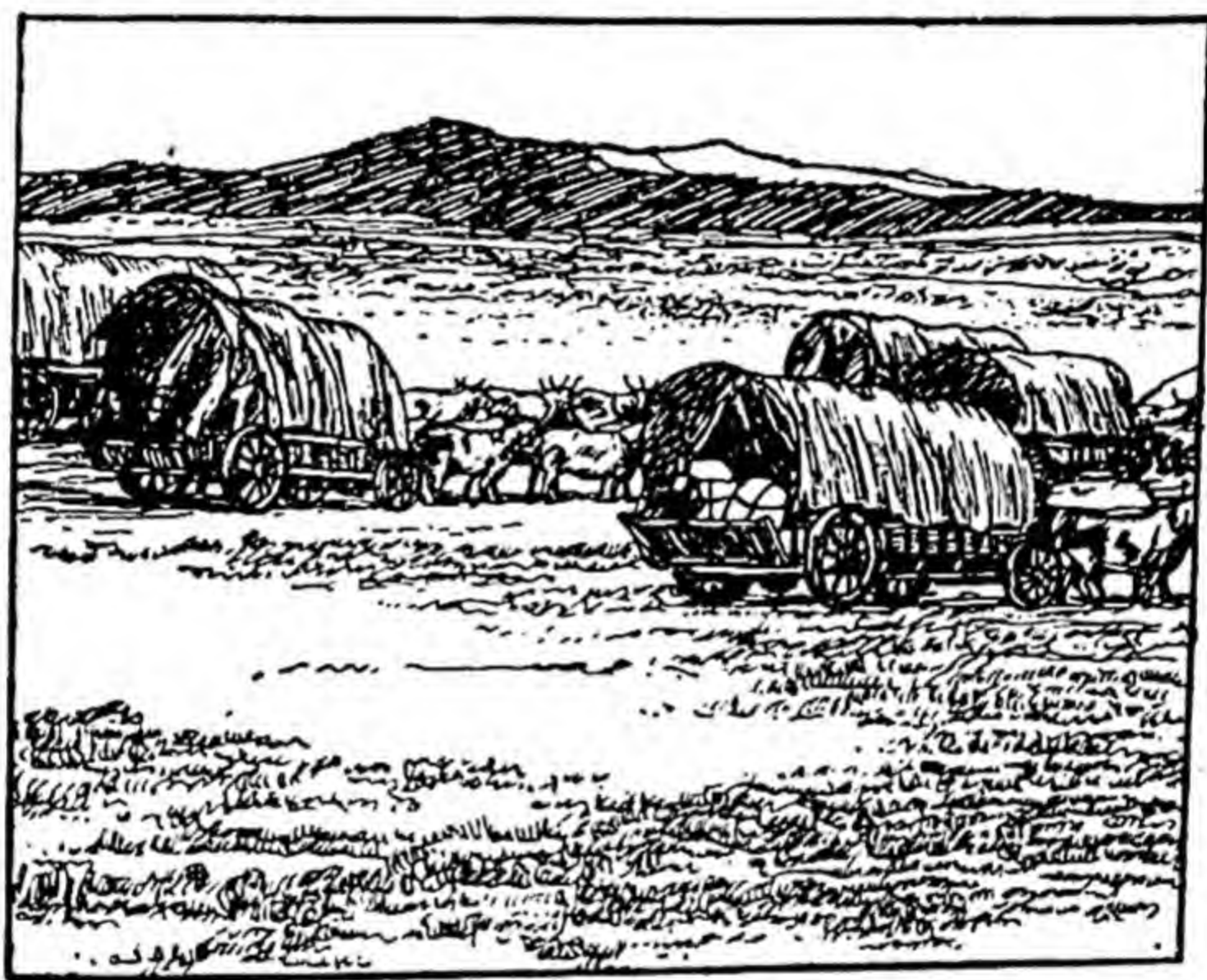
#### **The Great Trek (1836)**

Gradually the white men pushed their way inland or round the east coast to Natal. Here they met with the warlike Zulus under their bloodthirsty chief Chaka. Chaka had been cured of a wound by an Englishman, and in 1824 allowed a small group of English pioneers to settle in Natal. Four years later



Chaka was murdered by his treacherous brother Dingaan, who succeeded to the leadership of the Zulus. In 1825 Sir Benjamin D'Urban, Governor of Cape Colony, founded Durban which soon became the chief port for Natal.

Meanwhile serious differences had arisen between the British and Dutch in Cape Colony. Racial jealousies were accentuated when in 1828 English was made the official language. The relations between whites and natives also caused trouble. The Boers were accused, largely by missionaries, of ill-treating the Kaffirs, and in 1828 full political equality was decreed between



BOERS TREKKING INTO NATAL

whites and natives. In 1833 the British Parliament abolished slavery, and although compensation was paid to the Boers, the latter complained that it was less than half the value of the freed slaves. Most of the Boers desired to lead their own lives free from the interference of a government which failed to give them adequate protection against the Kaffirs. D'Urban, who realized the difficulties of the native question far more than arm-chair officials and humanitarians at home, annexed large tracts of Kaffir territory to protect the white frontier. When the government disavowed D'Urban's action and recalled him (1836), the Boers decided to move.



In 1836 the Great Trek began. In the course of two years 5,000 men, women, and children packed their belongings in covered ox-drawn wagons to seek a new life (or meet a horrible death) in the little-known lands beyond the Orange. Under Potgieter, Maritz, and Retief they settled in the Orange River Colony and in Natal. Most of them went to the latter, where a treacherous massacre by Dingaan was avenged later in the same year (1838) at Blood River.

### **Britain's Relations with Boers and Natives (1840-1881)**

The Boers had thus placed themselves beyond the immediate reach of the British in Cape Colony, but they were not left alone. In 1842 the British government declared Natal a British colony, and a few years later proclaimed British sovereignty over the Orange River Colony. The Boers resisted but were defeated by the British Governor, Sir Harry Smith, in 1848. Thereupon many of them moved across the Vaal River and founded the Transvaal Republic. The liberal-minded Whig government of Lord John Russell sought to end these ever-recurring disputes by the Sand River Convention of 1852 which recognized the independence of the Dutch farmers "beyond the Vaal River" on their promising to abandon slavery and grant trading facilities on a mutual basis. Two years later the Bloemfontein Convention recognized the similar independence of the Orange River Colony, which now became the Orange Free State.

About 1860 Sir George Grey (more famous for his work in New Zealand) made unsuccessful efforts to federate the four white settlements into one state. Then in 1867 diamonds were discovered near the Orange River and later on near the Vaal. Kimberley became the chief centre; a rush of new settlers created fresh problems, and in 1871 the British government, to the annoyance of the Boers, annexed the Kimberley district. Disraeli's ministry (1874-1880) witnessed a new forward policy. His Colonial Secretary, Lord Carnarvon, who had been concerned in forming the Dominion of Canada in 1867, made fresh efforts to federate the South African colonies and sent out Sir



Bartle Frere as Governor of Cape Colony. Twelve days before his arrival (1877) the British government announced the annexation of the Transvaal, which had fallen into disorder and was threatened by the growing power of a new Zulu chief, Cetewayo. For several years Britain was occupied with trouble from both Zulus and Boers.

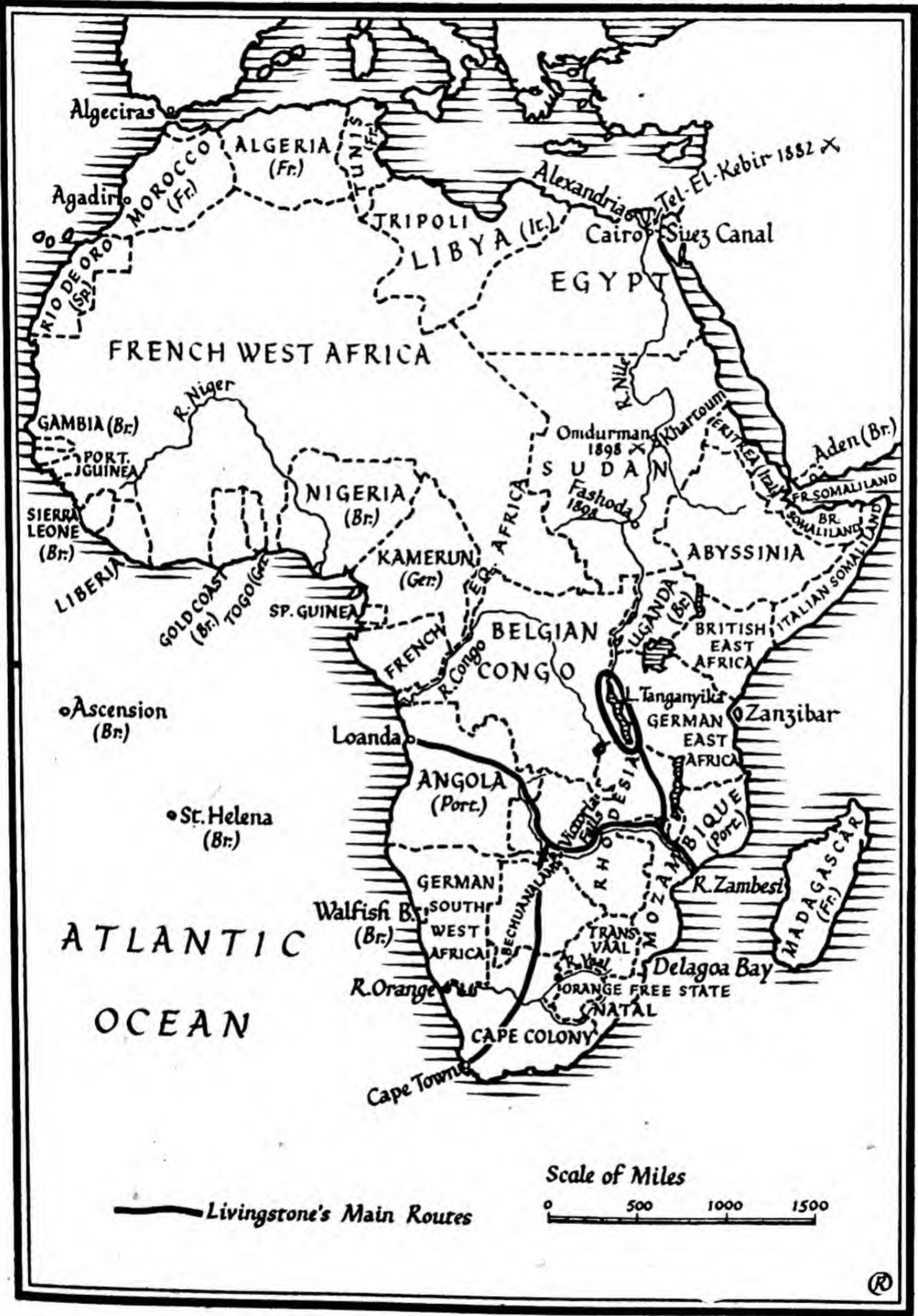
In 1879 the Zulu War was waged to break the power of Cetewayo, who had ordered his warriors not to marry till they had dipped their spears in the blood of an enemy. A British force crossed the Tugela River on the northern boundary of Natal. At Isandhlwana 800 soldiers were wiped out by 18,000 Zulus. Another small force gallantly defended Rorke's Drift till help came. A few months later the Zulus were routed at Ulundi.

The Transvaal Boers had for the most part acquiesced in the British annexation of 1877, but with the Zulu danger now past they tried afresh to throw off the British yoke. The result was the First Boer War (1880-1881), when a British army was defeated at Majuba Hill (1881). Before this disaster Gladstone had succeeded Disraeli (1880) with the intention of recognizing Boer independence. He kept to his plan, and by the Pretoria Convention the Transvaal was again declared independent. The Boers regarded their success as a result of their military victory.

### **The Opening-up of the 'Dark Continent'**

In the 1880's the European powers partitioned Africa. This was part of an awakened interest in the 'dark continent' which had led to its exploration in the middle years of the century. About 1800 a Scottish surgeon, Mungo Park, had set out from Gambia and explored the upper waters of the Niger. The most famous of all African explorers was another Scotsman, David Livingstone. Born of humble parents in 1813 and sent to work in a cotton-mill at the age of ten, Livingstone studied hard, qualified in medicine, and in 1841 went out to Africa for the London Missionary Society. Livingstone devoted the rest of his life to exploring Africa, teaching and converting the natives,





EUROPEAN COLONIZATION OF AFRICA TO 1914



and suppressing the slave-trade. In 1873 he died in the heart of the continent. In 1852-1856 he made his most famous of all journeys from the east coast to the source of the Zambesi and then across the upper waters of the Congo river-system to Loanda on the west coast. He was thus the first white man to travel from coast to coast. On his return journey he discovered the great Victoria Falls on the Zambesi. In 1866 he set out to explore the Lake Tanganyika region, where he fell sick and was stranded through lack of equipment till his discovery by Stanley in October, 1871. H. M. Stanley was later employed by King Leopold of the Belgians to explore the Congo basin. At the same time other explorers, including several famous Germans, were revealing the mysteries of the Sahara and the headwaters of the Nile. Livingstone continued his work in Africa right up to his death in 1873.

The new interest in Africa found expression, as far as Britain was concerned, in the person of Cecil Rhodes.

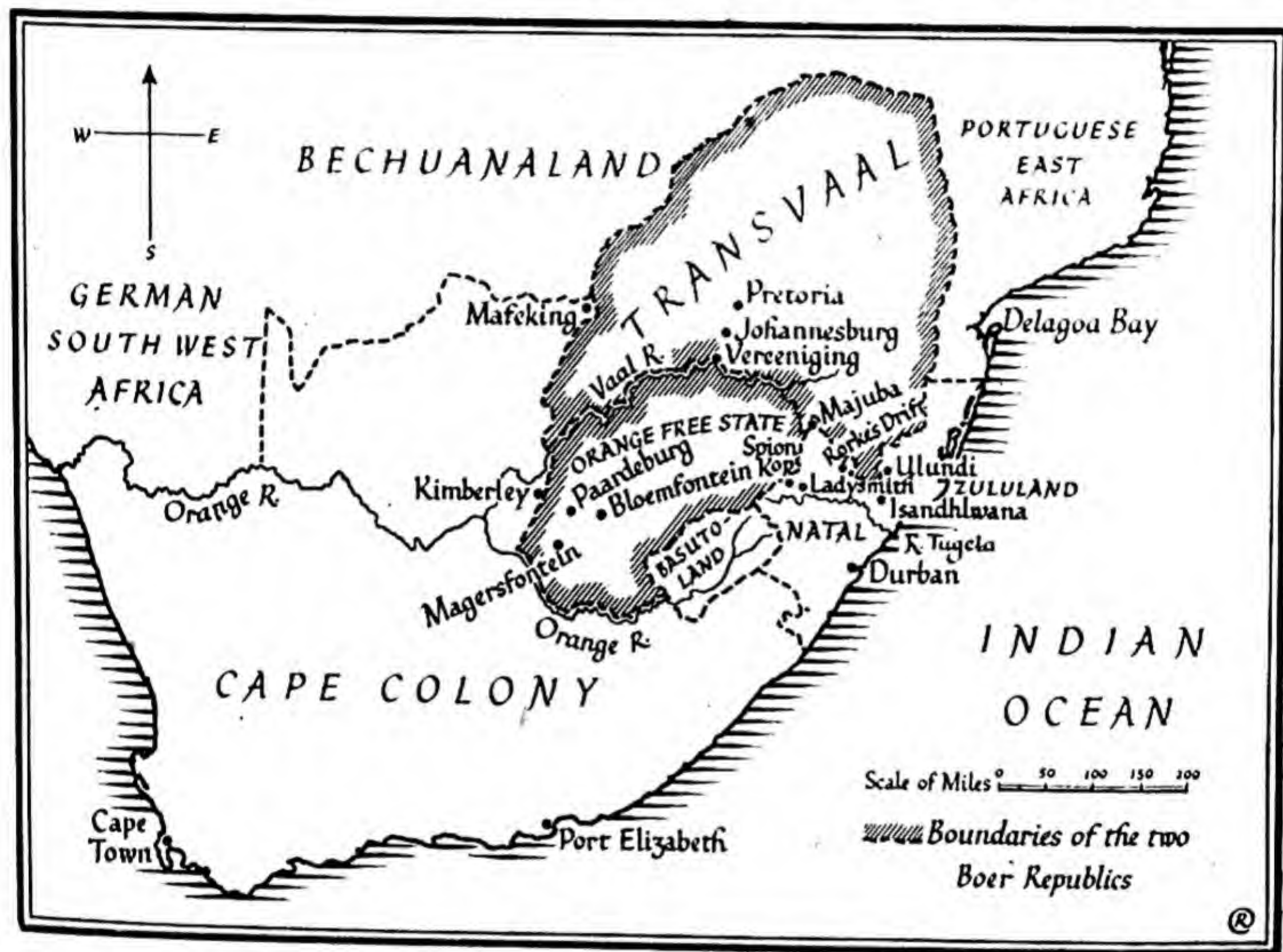
### **Cecil Rhodes and a New Forward Policy**

Cecil Rhodes (1853-1902) went out in 1870 to his brother's farm in Natal on account of his health. There he first dreamed of extending British power in Africa. He returned to England and, despite ill-health, took his degree at Oxford. On returning to Africa he organized the De Beers Diamond Company and amassed a large fortune. His dream now began to take definite shape—the building of a line of British colonies from the Cape to Cairo. In 1884 he induced the British government to annex Bechuanaland, and in 1889 he founded the British South Africa Company, which opened up Matabele lands north of Transvaal and thus founded the British colony of Rhodesia. Its first ruler was Rhodes's friend Dr Jameson. From 1890 to 1896 Rhodes was Prime Minister of Cape Colony, which had for the past twenty years enjoyed full responsible self-government. Rhodes wished to achieve what previous statesmen had failed to do—to unite Boer Republics and British colonies in one federation. But the discovery of gold in the Transvaal in 1886 soon upset all calculations.



## The Second Boer War (1899-1902)

A gold rush occurred and a big new city grew up at Johannesburg. Most of the newcomers were British and were called by the Boers Uitlanders or Outlanders. Under President Kruger of the Transvaal, who as a boy of eleven had taken part in the Great Trek, the Dutch excluded the Uitlanders from all political rights, especially the right to vote, and placed other



THE SOUTH AFRICAN WARS

obstacles in their way. Joseph Chamberlain at the Colonial Office worked for a peaceful solution, but Kruger refused all compromise. The Uitlanders, with the support of Rhodes, planned a rising, and in 1895-1896 Dr Jameson and a few hundred horsemen raided the Transvaal to give help to the insurgents. The Jameson Raid was easily suppressed by the Boers, and the German Emperor sent his famous 'Kruger telegram,' congratulating the Boer President on his success. The British government disavowed the raiders, many of whom were punished in British courts. Rhodes resigned his premier-



ship of Cape Colony owing to his implication in the affair (1896), and thereafter his influence over South African affairs diminished. On his death in 1902 he left part of his large fortune to Oxford University to provide scholarships for overseas students. The result of Jameson's raid was to stiffen the attitude of both parties. Sir Alfred Milner was sent out to try direct negotiations over the whole question of the Uitlanders who, in Milner's words, had been "reduced to the position of helots." Milner unwisely revived the old question of British suzerainty; this angered Kruger and when negotiations broke down he declared war (1899).

The Unionist government of Salisbury and Chamberlain was not so warlike as the Boers and Britain's continental critics imagined, but it felt obliged to take up the challenge. It was strongly supported by the London crowds which looked forward to the avenging of Majuba Hill. The Liberals were sharply divided. Morley and Lloyd George were pronounced pro-Boers, while Rosebery led the Liberal Imperialists. The Dominions for the first time sent troops to help the mother-country.

The war dragged on for three years owing to the skill of the Boers in guerrilla fighting and inadequate preparations by the British government which underestimated its enemy. At the outset the Boers invaded Cape Colony and Natal and laid siege to Kimberley, Mafeking, and Ladysmith. In the 'Black Week' of December 10-15 three British relieving forces were defeated. Early in 1900 Lord Roberts, with Kitchener as his Chief-of-Staff, was sent out in command of larger and better-equipped forces. Roberts avoided frontal attacks and compelled a large Boer army under Cronje to surrender at Paardeberg (February). When Mafeking, which had held out under Colonel Baden-Powell (founder of the Boy Scout movement) for over 200 days, was relieved in May the British public felt that the tide had turned and the London crowds went mad with delight. By September, 1900, Roberts had so far succeeded as to annex the two Boer republics and return home. For nearly two more years small bands of Boer guerrillas or 'commandos' continued the struggle under resourceful leaders like De Wet



and Botha. Kitchener eventually overcame them by erecting blockhouses for the scattered British forces, burning the Boer farms which served as commando rallying-points, and herding the Boer civilian population into large camps. These methods, although perhaps military necessities, embittered feelings.

The Peace of Vereeniging (May, 1902) and its sequel did something to efface the scars of war. The Transvaal and the Orange Free State were annexed to Britain, but they were promised self-government and given three million pounds to help rebuild and restock their farms—a unique case of a victor power paying ‘reparations’ to its defeated foe. During the next few years Milner worked hard and sympathetically to restore the Boer republics to their former state of prosperity. In 1906 Campbell-Bannerman honoured Britain’s promise to confer full responsible self-government upon the Boers. Three years later the four South African colonies (Cape Colony, Natal, Transvaal, and the Orange Free State) united to form the Union of South Africa. Its first Prime Minister was the old Boer leader, General Botha; another Boer soldier, Field-Marshal Smuts, has distinguished himself even more by statesmanship and by devotion to the British Commonwealth. Under the guidance of such men the Union has proved successful, but many difficulties still await solution in this most mixed of all the dominions. Nearly eight million natives live side by side with two million Europeans, and of the latter nearly 60 per cent. speak the Dutch Afrikaans language.

#### (4) EGYPT AND THE SUDAN

##### **British Control in Egypt**

Egypt was an outlying province of the Turkish Empire which, under Mehemet Ali in the first half of the nineteenth century, had become practically, though not legally, independent of the Sultan. Ever since Napoleon’s invasion France had shown a lively interest in its affairs, and in 1869 the French engineer, Ferdinand de Lesseps, constructed the Suez Canal. Britain opposed the design as threatening her eastern possessions, but



during Disraeli's government (1874-1880) British aloofness was abandoned. The extravagant Khedive or Viceroy of Egypt, Ismail, was in debt and offered his Suez Canal shares for sale. As explained elsewhere (*p.* 199) Disraeli snapped them up (1875). In 1876 the European powers, headed by Britain and France, stepped in to control Egyptian finances in the interests of the bondholders who had lent the spendthrift Ismail large sums of money. When Ismail refused to take the 'advice' offered him, he was deposed in favour of his son Tewfik (1879). The Dual Control of France and Britain was at the same time strengthened.

European interference provoked the inevitable reaction. An Egyptian officer, Arabi Pasha, soon headed a nationalist party with the cry of "Egypt for the Egyptians!" In 1882 fifty Europeans were killed in riots at Alexandria. The task of maintaining order and protecting lives and property obviously devolved upon France and Britain. But France backed out, leaving the problem to Gladstone (in office for his second ministry 1880-1885). In 1882 the British fleet bombarded Alexandria, and a British force under Sir Garnet Wolseley defeated Arabi at Tel-el-Kebir. British control was now complete, and, although successive governments declared Britain's occupation to be temporary, it was found more difficult to get out of Egypt than to get in. France resented the British occupation which for the next twenty years did more than anything else to poison the relations between the two countries. For over twenty years (1883-1907) the British official, Sir Evelyn Baring (better known as Lord Cromer), was the real ruler of Egypt. He purified the government, enforced the law, strengthened the army, lowered taxes, increased revenues, and promoted large irrigation and other public works.

### **Failures and Successes in the Sudan**

South of Egypt, and controlling the upper waters of the Nile, lies the vast country of the Sudan. Ismail had tried to conquer it with the help of a British governor, General Gordon, but had



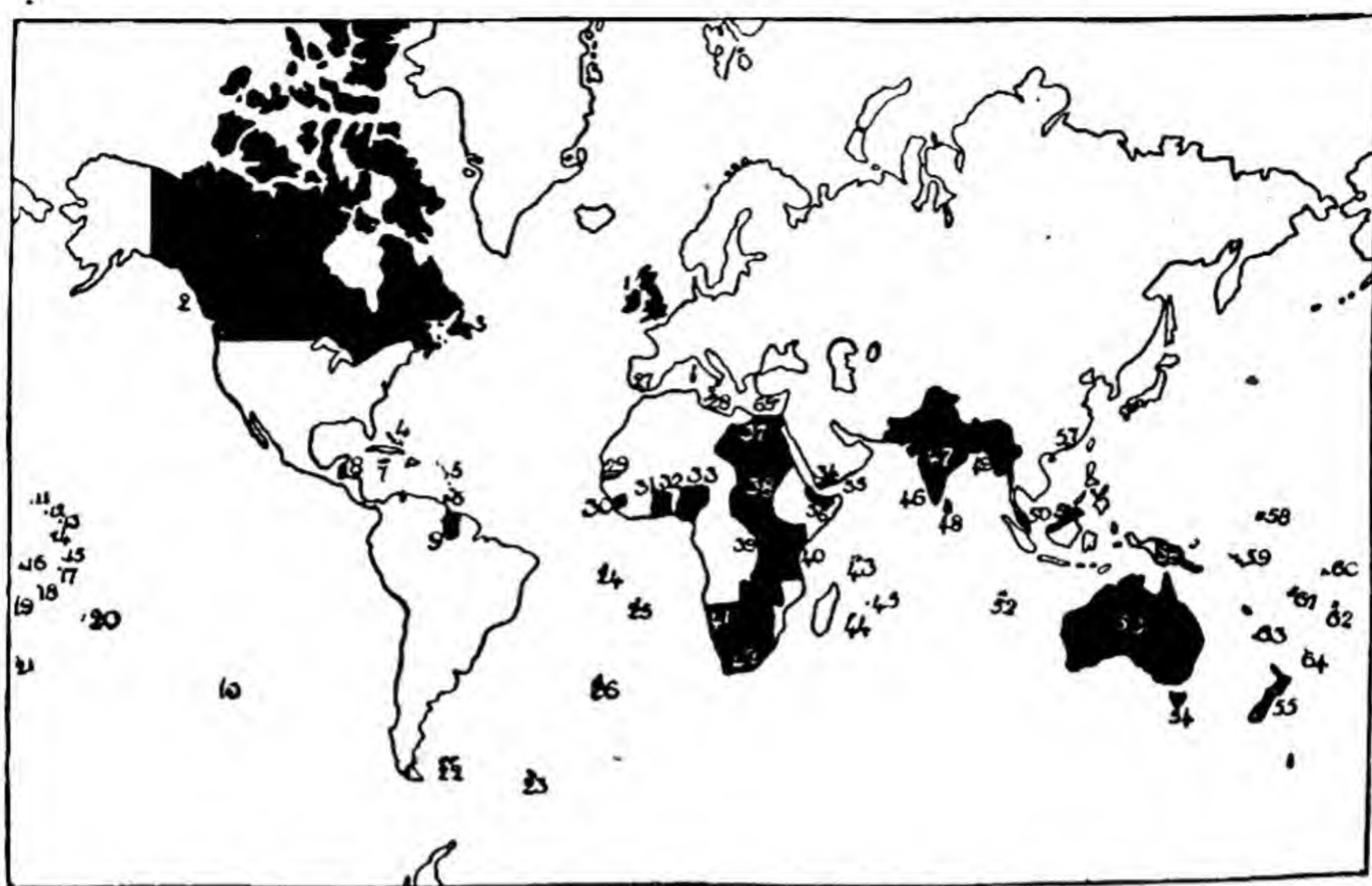
never really succeeded. In 1883 a fanatic calling himself the Mahdi or the Prophet rallied the dervishes to expel all signs of British or Egyptian rule. He defeated an Anglo-Egyptian force under Colonel Hicks. Cromer advised the British government to renounce all attempts to conquer the Sudan and withdraw, advice which Gladstone willingly accepted. Unfortunately the government, influenced by a newspaper campaign, chose General Gordon to organize the withdrawal. When Gordon arrived at Khartoum (1884), he was reluctant to leave the Sudan at the mercy of the dervishes, and announced instead his intention of 'smashing' the Mahdi. He was besieged at Khartoum and appealed for help. Gladstone was unwilling to save his disobedient agent, and when at last help was sent it was too late. Gordon was killed in January, 1885, a few days before Wolseley's advance forces reached Khartoum. Gladstone was blamed by the Queen and the public.

For some years the Sudan was left alone. Then in 1896 preparations began for its reconquest with the construction of a railway to take supplies up the Nile valley. In 1898 Kitchener defeated the Mahdi's son and successor at Omdurman, and Gordon was avenged. In the same year Kitchener forced the French to withdraw from Fashoda (see *p.* 225). The Sudan was then placed under joint British and Egyptian rule.

### **The Twentieth Century**

The Anglo-French entente of 1904 settled the long-standing quarrel between the two countries over the Egyptian question. In 1914, when Turkey declared war on the Allies, Britain declared Egypt a protectorate free from all allegiance to the Sultan. After the Great War a new Nationalist party arose to remind Britain of her ancient promises of withdrawal. In 1922 the British protectorate was renounced, and Egypt was given independence subject to certain safeguards concerning the Suez Canal, the defence of Egypt, the government of the Sudan, and the rights of foreigners. A subsequent treaty in 1936 completed Egyptian independence and established an alliance between Britain and Egypt.





THE BRITISH EMPIRE IN RELATION TO THE WORLD AT THE CLOSE OF THE  
PEACE CONFERENCE, 1919

1. United Kingdom. 2. Canada. 3. Newfoundland. 4. Bahamas. 5. Windward and Leeward Is. 6. Trinidad. 7. Jamaica. 8. British Honduras. 9. British Guiana.
10. Pitcairn Is. 11. Palmyra Is. 12. Fanning Is. 13. Christmas Is. 14. Jarvis Is.
15. Malden Is. 16. Phoenix Is. 17. Starbuck Is. 18. Victoria Is. 19. Tokelau Is.
20. Manihiki Is. 21. Cook Is. 22. Falkland Is. 23. St. George. 24. Ascension.
25. St. Helena. 26. Tristan da Cunha. 27. Gibraltar. 28. Malta. 29. Gambia.
30. Sierra Leone. 31. Gold Coast, Ashanti. 32. Togoland. 33. Nigeria. 34. Aden.
35. Perim. 36. British Somaliland. 37. Egypt. 38. Sudan. 39. Rhodesia. 40. East Africa.
41. South-west Africa. 42. Cape Colony. 43. Seychelles. 44. Mauritius.
45. Rodriguez. 46. Maldives and Laccadive Is. 47. India. 48. Ceylon. 49. Burma.
50. Malay Peninsula. 51. Borneo. 52. Cocos Is. 53. Australia. 54. Tasmania.
55. New Zealand. 56. New Guinea. 57. Hong-Kong. 58. Gilbert Is. 59. Solomon Is.
60. Samoa. 61. Fiji. 62. Friendly Is. 63. Norfolk Is. 64. Kermadec Is. 65. Cyprus.

## (5) THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH OF NATIONS

### From Empire to Commonwealth

Apart from the Dominions and India the British Empire contains scattered colonies of various sorts with a total native population of about 60 millions. As far as the Dominions are concerned the term 'empire' is no longer really applicable. The Dominions have risen through the various stages of self-government and responsible government till they now enjoy the same rights and status as the mother-country itself. During the Great War Dominion statesmen became members of the Imperial War Cabinet. The Dominions signed the peace treaties separately and became members of the League of Nations in their own right ; some of them accepted the responsibility for



mandated territories. Their complete equality with the mother-country was recognized by the Statute of Westminster (1931). But freedom has not resulted in separation. The Colonial Conferences which began with the Jubilee of 1887 have grown into the more important Imperial Conferences of our own time, while other bonds of union exist in a common allegiance to the Crown, a sense of kinship, and above all in a devotion to the same ideals.

### QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Write an essay on the development of Canada from 1763 to 1867.

2. Give an account of (a) the Great Trek (1836), (b) the Zulu and Boer Wars (1879-1881), (c) the second Boer War (1899-1902).

3. Write brief notes on the following men: Edward Gibbon Wakefield, Lord Durham, Sir George Grey, David Livingstone, Cecil Rhodes.

4. Describe the relations between Britain and Egypt from 1869 to the present day.

5. Write notes on: The Treaty of Waitangi (1840), the British North America Act (1867), the Australian Commonwealth Act (1900), the Statute of Westminster (1931).



## CHAPTER XIX

### INDIA FROM CLIVE TO CRIPPS

#### **The Condition of India after 1763**

By the Treaty of Paris (1763) Britain became the paramount power in India. It must be remembered, however, that British rule was still confined to a very small part of India, its chief centres being Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay. Outside these districts India was very unsettled, the Mogul Emperor being little more than a puppet. In central India a warlike race, the Mahrattas, was busy extending its power and building up a vast Confederacy, while in the south strong states like Hyderabad and Mysore sought to make themselves supreme. Thrones and boundaries were continually changing. British rule was still exercised through the East India Company, a trading-concern with its eye upon profits. The servants of the Company thus enjoyed wide powers of government without proper responsibilities. Corruption inevitably occurred. The Company's ill-paid servants found ways of enriching themselves by accepting presents, engaging in private trade, and oppressing the natives. Realizing this, Clive had urged that the British government should assume control, but nothing was done.

During Clive's absence in England after Plassey a British force defeated an alliance between the Nabobs of Bengal and Oudh and the Mogul Emperor at the battle of Buxar (1764). In 1765 Clive again returned to India and during the next two years did much to purify the Company's administration. He increased salaries to make corruption less excusable and forbade private trading. The victory at Buxar enabled him to obtain from the Mogul Emperor the right of collecting the taxes of Bengal and to conclude an alliance with Oudh which thus became a buffer-state for the defence of Bengal. When Clive returned to England in 1767 he was attacked by his enemies who raked up the old accusation that he had accepted bribes from Mir Jaffir during his first governorship of Bengal. On



being examined by a parliamentary committee (1773) Clive, with his closer knowledge of the riches and the practices of the east, exclaimed, "By God, Mr Chairman, at this moment I stand astonished at my own moderation!" Clive was censured, but his "great and meritorious services to his country" were recognized. In 1774, worn out by disease and anxiety, he committed suicide.

### **Lord North's Regulating Act (1773)**

Despite Clive's attempts at reform the administration of the Company continued to be unsatisfactory, and in 1773 the government took the first step to bring under its own control the work of governing India. By North's Regulating Act the Governor of Bengal was made Governor-General of all the British possessions, and a council of four had to approve his decisions. Judges were appointed to administer English law independent of the Company. Events showed that the Governor-General could be too much hampered by his council and even at times by the judges.

### **Warren Hastings—First Governor-General (1774-1785)**

Warren Hastings had seen much service in India and had protested against the worst abuses of the Company's administration. In 1772 he was appointed Governor of Bengal; two years later he became the first Governor-General, a position which he held till 1785.

Hastings began with strenuous efforts to purify the government by suppressing private trade and bribery, raising salaries, and associating Indians with the actual administration. During these early years he was hampered by the opposition of his council of four, of whom three were his personal enemies. Foremost among these was Sir Philip Francis, who attacked Hastings for the execution of a wealthy Hindu named Nuncomar on a charge of forgery. Nuncomar's real offence, said Francis, was that he was about to expose the misdeeds of Hastings himself. Hastings and Francis ultimately fought a duel; the latter was severely wounded and returned to



England, where he continued his attacks upon the Governor-General.

The rule of Hastings covered the years (1775-1783) of the American War of Independence. After France's entry into this war in 1778 Hastings required all his ability and energy to maintain British rule in India. A French admiral, de Suffren, threatened British command of the sea in Indian waters, while France intrigued with the Mahrattas of northern India and with Hyder Ali of Mysore in the south. In 1780 the latter invaded the Carnatic and almost extinguished British rule round Madras. Hastings promptly dispatched Sir Eyre Coote south, and the veteran victor of Wandewash defeated Hyder Ali at Porto Novo (1781). Hyder Ali died in the following year. At sea Admiral Hughes fought several engagements which, although indecisive, checked the French naval threat. The end of the war saw British power in India fully maintained, thanks to Hastings.

In 1785 Hastings returned to England. In 1788 Sir Philip Francis and others secured his impeachment before the House of Lords. During the famous trial, which lasted seven years, Hastings was accused of many crimes: the execution of Nuncomar, the loan of British troops to the Nabob of Oudh, the torturing of the ministers of the Begums of Oudh (the Nabob's mother and grandmother) in order to extort large sums of money. Many of the charges were completely untrue or distorted, although in some instances Hastings may have acted unwisely. The eloquence of Burke and the later essay of Macaulay have combined to stress the dark side of Hastings' career and give a wrong impression. Although Hastings was acquitted, the trial enforced the valuable lesson that Asiatics have rights and Europeans have obligations.

### **Pitt's India Act (1784)**

The Regulating Act obviously needed amendment, which Fox in 1783 tried unsuccessfully to secure. In 1784 Pitt passed his India Act. The Governor-General's position was strengthened by making him less dependent upon his council. But his



general policy was henceforth subject to a Board of Control in London, consisting of a Secretary of State, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and four Privy Councillors. Through this Board (the forerunner of the present India Office) the political government of India was ultimately controlled by Parliament. The East India Company continued as a trading-concern with the power of appointing officials, but its higher appointments were subject to the approval of the government.

This dual government, which lasted till the Indian Mutiny, was a compromise between the claims of the Company and those of the British government, although in the last resort the latter obviously held the whip hand. Gradually the Company declined. In 1813 it lost its monopoly of the Indian trade, in 1833 its monopoly of the China trade; thereafter, till its abolition in 1858, it was little more than a machine of government.

### **Extension of British Rule: Wellesley**

The first Governor-General under Pitt's Act was Lord Cornwallis of Yorktown fame (1786-1793). Cornwallis formed alliances against Tippoo Sahib, the son of Hyder Ali of Mysore, who continued his father's policy of threatening British rule. Cornwallis is chiefly remembered, however, for his Permanent Settlement in Bengal, by which the Bengal tax-collectors were practically converted into landlords paying a fixed rent to the government. This arrangement has been much criticized, for it stereotyped the payment to the government while leaving the tax-gatherers free to extort higher rents from the Indian peasantry.

Richard, Marquis Wellesley, Governor-General from 1798 to 1805, realized that British rule must be all or nothing; either it must extend, in some way or other, over the whole of India, or else, by limiting its aims, renounce its obligations and face the prospect of continual wars. Wellesley, spurred on by French intrigues and Napoleon's landing in Egypt in 1798, chose the policy of extension, which he pursued with the aid of his younger brother, Arthur, the future Duke of Wellington. In southern India he made an alliance with the Nizam of



Hyderabad to attack Tippoo Sahib of Mysore. In 1799 'Citizen Tippoo' of the French Republic was killed when his capital of Seringapatam was stormed—an exploit in which Arthur Wellesley participated. Part of Mysore was annexed, and the rest was restored to its original house in alliance with Britain. Further alliances with the rulers of Tanjore and the Carnatic consolidated British power in the south. Turning north, Arthur Wellesley attacked the powerful Mahratta tribes, which he defeated at Assaye and Argaum in 1803. This 'forward' policy was expensive and not always successful, and in 1805 the government recalled Lord Wellesley.

The final subjugation of the Mahrattas was accomplished by Lord Hastings (1813–1823) who also defeated the Gurkhas of Nepal and established peace with them.

### **Bentinck and Auckland**

Lord William Bentinck, Governor-General from 1828 to 1835, concentrated on the peaceful reform of Indian life. He restricted the growth of opium; he suppressed the Thugs, a race of hereditary murderers who practised killing as a sacrifice to the goddess Kali; and he tried to stamp out *suttee*, the Hindu practice of burning a widow on her husband's funeral pyre, which accounted for about 600 cruel burnings a year. In 1833 the East India Company lost its last remaining trading privileges; its new charter embodied Bentinck's ideals of government in its memorable statement that "No native of India, or any natural born subject of His Majesty, shall be disabled from holding any place, office, or employment by reason of his religion, place of birth, descent, or colour." It was a member of Bentinck's new council under this charter, the historian Macaulay, who in 1835 chose English as the language of the educational system then beginning in India. India has no common language (indeed a traveller throughout India needs to know as many languages as he would require for the whole of Europe), and English was intended to fill the gap. But the choice of English had important consequences; it was later resented by Indian nationalists, but nevertheless it



enabled them to study English literature whence they derived many of their ideas of freedom.

Bentinck was succeeded by the more warlike Lord Auckland (1836-1842). British rule as yet did not include the Indus valley where lay Sind in the south and the Punjab (the land of the five rivers) in the north. Beyond the Indus lay the north-west frontier the passes of which, notably the Khyber, have from time immemorial been the gateway to India. Beyond these passes lay Afghanistan. Russia had already reached Afghanistan and Russian agents were intriguing with its Amir, Dost Mohammed. Auckland, like Palmerston, feared the extension of Russian influence, and decided somewhat unwisely on the conquest of Afghanistan. The first Afghan War lasted from 1839 to 1842. Dost Mohammed was deposed and Kabul occupied by a British force (1839). In 1841 the Afghan tribes rose in revolt against British influence. The British force of 16,000 in Kabul was cut off and in 1841 accepted a safe-conduct from Dost Mohammed's son. But when it sallied forth the party was treacherously attacked, and only one survivor reached the British outpost at Jellalabad. Expeditions were sent to avenge the disaster, but the attempt to conquer Afghanistan was abandoned and Dost Mohammed was allowed to regain his throne.

British reputation had suffered under these reverses. To retrieve it Sir Charles Napier conquered Sind in 1843. "We have no right to seize Sind," he wrote, "yet we shall do so, and a very advantageous, useful, humane piece of rascality it will be." Two years later Britain was involved in the first Sikh War (1845-1846) in the Punjab. The Sikhs were members of a strict Hindu sect imbued, like Cromwell's Ironsides, with religious zeal and warlike fervour. After initial victories they were defeated, but the war ended with the larger part of the Punjab still independent. Such was the situation when Lord Dalhousie became Governor-General.

### **Lord Dalhousie (1848-1856)**

Dalhousie, a friend of Peel, was a strong-minded man untroubled by any doubts concerning the superiority of western



over eastern civilization. Under him British India was considerably extended and western methods introduced.

He was immediately faced with a second Sikh War. The Sikhs won a victory at Chillianwallah, but were defeated in the same year at Gujerat (1849). Dalhousie then annexed the Punjab, which was placed under the control of the brothers Henry and John Lawrence. Their wise rule changed the Sikhs from enemies into friends, and during the Indian Mutiny (1857) the Sikhs remained loyal. Dalhousie also annexed Pegu in Lower Burma following disputes between British merchants and natives, and Oudh in the Ganges basin on the plea (largely justified) that it was being misgoverned by its nabob. Three annexations in central India (Satara, Nagpore, and Jhansi) were made under Dalhousie's new doctrine of 'lapse,' whereby the states of native rulers who died without natural heirs lapsed to British rule; this disregarded the old Hindu practice of adopting heirs.

Dalhousie also pursued a vigorous policy of modernization and westernization. India was becoming an increasingly important source of raw materials (cotton, hides, oil-seeds) as well as a market for British manufactures. Under Dalhousie telegraphs and railways were introduced; roads were constructed, the most important being the Grand Trunk Road from Delhi to Calcutta; an immense irrigation canal was built in the Ganges basin; and a flat postage-rate of three-farthings was introduced throughout India. When Dalhousie departed in 1856 he left behind a much-improved, but a somewhat bewildered and suspicious country.

### **The Indian Mutiny (1857)**

Dalhousie was succeeded by Lord Canning, son of the famous Foreign Secretary. Within a year he was faced by the Indian Mutiny.

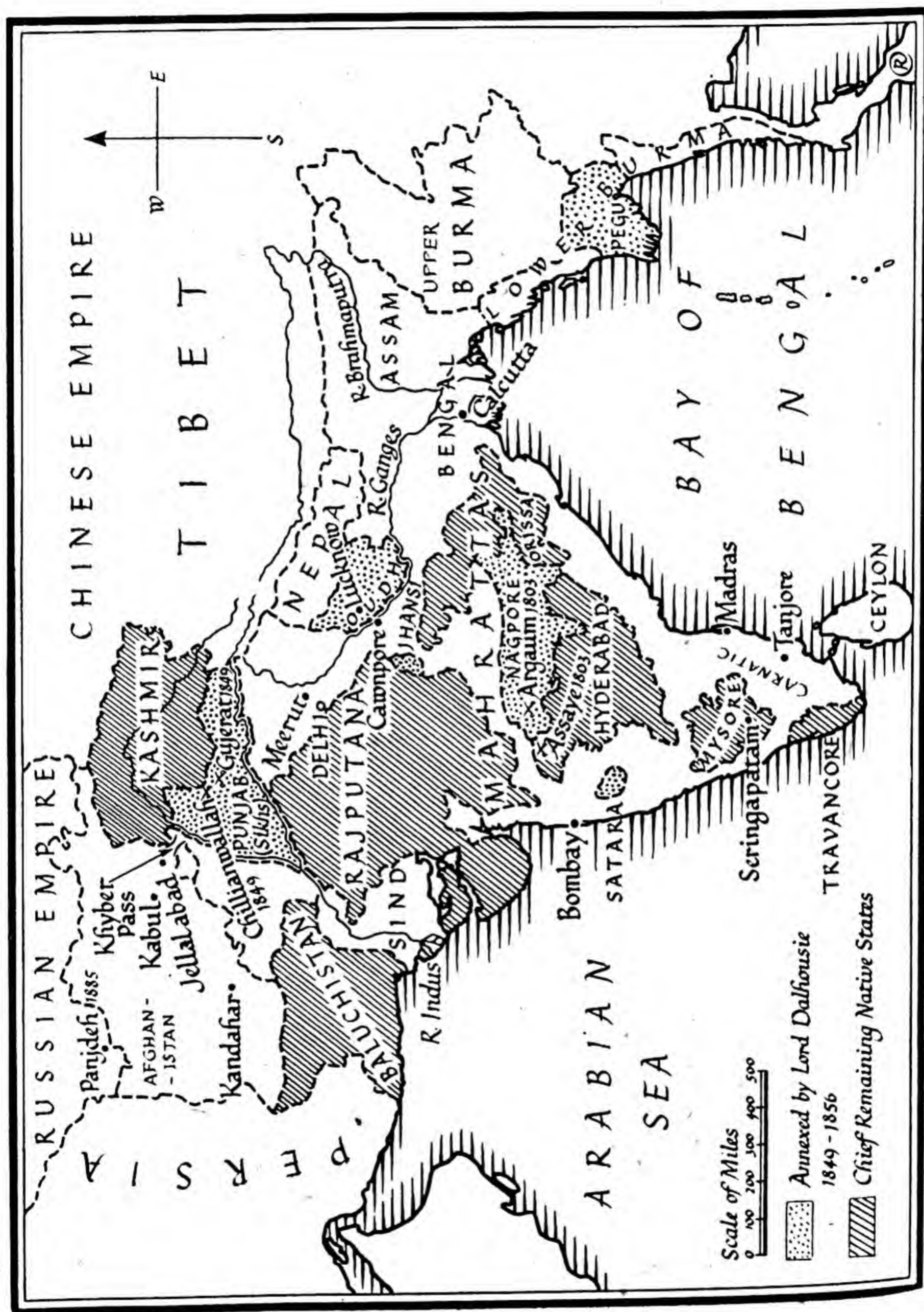
This mutiny was a rising of the sepoys or native troops of northern India and was in no sense a national revolt. Indeed, many natives, such as the Sikhs and the Gurkhas, helped in its suppression. Its causes were manifold. Dalhousie's annexa-



tions had created ill-feeling, especially in Oudh where the aristocracy lost much of its land. The Afghan, Sikh, and Crimean Wars had damaged the reputation of British arms—and there were only 40,000 white troops in India as against 230,000 native. Western methods, however beneficial, had at times been rashly introduced. Bentinck's suppression of *suttee* and thuggism, and Dalhousie's doctrine of lapse, undermined eastern faith and practice. The railway and the telegraph savoured of magic; the former also conflicted with the caste system by herding people into common waiting-rooms and carriages. A new order that Indians were liable for service abroad contravened the objection of some castes to the crossing of salt water. Finally came the new Enfield rifle replacing the old Brown Bess. The new cartridges were smeared with grease and the end had to be bitten off before use. It was rumoured that the grease was obtained from cows and pigs; Hindu and Moslem united in opposition, as the cow is sacred to the Hindus, and the pig unclean to the Moslems. This was in 1857, exactly a century after Plassey, when the superstitious believed that British power would end.

On May 10, 1857, the sepoy of Meerut revolted and marched on Delhi, where they enthroned the descendant of the Mogul emperors. The mutiny then spread down the Ganges. At Cawnpore Nana Sahib treacherously slaughtered several hundred Europeans, men, women, and children, and cast their bodies down a well. At Lucknow, the capital of Oudh, a small garrison under Sir Henry Lawrence was besieged for three months. In September the tide began to turn. Sir John Lawrence sent a force composed of British and Sikhs under John Nicholson to recapture Delhi, which they did after blowing in the Kashmir Gate and engaging in six days' street fighting. Lucknow, where Sir Henry Lawrence had been killed, was reinforced by Havelock whose small army fought its way in. In November Sir Colin Campbell arrived with larger forces to raise the siege. The next year saw the embers of mutiny finally stamped out, not without many cruel and unnecessary reprisals by the British. These, with the massacre







at Cawnpore, left behind bitter memories on both sides. Lord Canning earned the honourable nickname of 'Clemency' Canning by his efforts to prevent reprisals and his refusal to adopt a policy of severe punishment.

The mutiny had important consequences. In 1858 the East India Company was abolished and the dual government of Pitt's Act of 1784 was ended. Henceforth a Secretary of State for India presiding over the India Office managed affairs in London, while in India the Governor-General was transformed into a Viceroy. Apart from disturbed frontier districts no more annexations occurred; thus India has come to consist of two parts—British India, amounting to roughly two-thirds of the country, and native India under its separate princes bound to Britain by various treaty-ties. Western reforms continued, but with greater regard to native susceptibilities; in 1858 the Queen issued a famous Proclamation enjoining those in authority to "abstain from all interference with the religious beliefs or worship of any of our subjects on pain of our highest displeasure." To safeguard against further disturbances the proportion of British to native troops was henceforth raised.

### **India from 1858 to 1914**

After the mutiny India settled down to a period of peace, the only troubles occurring on the frontiers. In 1876 Britain annexed Baluchistan. From 1878 to 1880 occurred the second Afghan War, which arose out of Russian penetration into Afghanistan. When the Amir received a Russian mission, Lord Lytton the Viceroy forced him to accept a British resident at Kabul. Soon afterwards (1879) the British resident was murdered. Britain sent a punitive expedition and deposed the Amir. The British force became involved in difficulties and was only saved by the brilliant march of Sir Frederick Roberts from Kabul to Kandahar (1880). British troops were then withdrawn and the independence of Afghanistan was restored. Five years later Russia's encroachment on Afghan territory at Penjdeh was sharply resisted by Britain. On India's other flank Britain annexed Upper Burma in 1885.



During these years the economic development of India proceeded apace. All kinds of public works were constructed, financed mainly by British capital. Foremost were the railways, of which over 20,000 miles were constructed in the half-century 1857-1907, and the canals. The latter, for irrigation purposes, were built mainly in the dry north-west, where they brought over thirty million acres into safe cultivation. Railways and canals killed the spectre of famine which had haunted India for centuries. They also developed India as an important source of food and raw materials, such as wheat, cotton, tea, and jute. India's exports increased tremendously; so too did her imports, which, consisting largely of Lancashire cotton goods, hit the old domestic industries of India very hard. In time India began to build her own cotton mills. Peace and security resulted in a startling increase in India's population. In forty years (1861-1901) the population of British India jumped from 143 millions to 231 millions. Most of these still live at an appallingly low standard of life, judged by European standards, for India's social and educational services are grossly inadequate for her needs. But the district officer, who is the man-of-all-work of the Indian Civil Service, has usually striven hard to improve the lot of the backward natives.

Responsibility for government remained in British hands, although small steps were taken to associate the natives with the ruling power. In 1861 an Indian Councils Act provided for a few nominated Indians on the legislative councils in the provinces. Since 1853 the Indian Civil Service had been open to competitive examination, and in 1864 the first Indian secured a place. In 1877 Queen Victoria was proclaimed Empress of India, thus filling the gap left by the Mogul emperors who, after the mutiny, had been deprived of all their former pretensions. In 1880 Lord Ripon began to give Indians more control over local affairs through their own elected bodies.

Towards the end of the century a new Indian nationalism arose—the result not so much of the defects as of the benefits of British rule: the railways which bound the country together,



the unwonted period of peace which turned men's thoughts from destruction to nation-building, and the education that many Indians received in the classical writings of English liberty. In 1885 the Indian National Congress was born to further Indian demands. As it was largely, but by no means entirely, a Hindu organization, the Moslems in 1906 formed a League of their own. The turn of the century was a time of unrest with India chafing under the rule of the foreigner. In 1909 the Morley-Minto reforms were passed, called after the Liberal John Morley at the India Office and Lord Minto the Viceroy. Indians were allowed to elect a majority of the members to the legislative councils in the provinces, and a few Indians were placed on the various executive councils throughout India and on the Secretary of State's Council in London. It was a step, but a very small step, towards self-government, for the provincial legislative councils had no real powers over their governments.

### **Constitutional Problems since the Great War**

During the Great War India played her part on the field of battle and at the council-board, and in 1917 the Secretary of State, Mr Montagu, promised her a progressive development towards complete self-government.

Indian self-government, however, is complicated by many problems, the most important of which are the existence of native states side by side with British India, the rivalry between Hindus and Moslems, and the Hindu caste-system which tolerates the existence of 40 million untouchables. The Montagu-Chelmsford reforms (1919) continued the election of provincial legislative councils, and also allowed Indians in the provinces to control certain of the less important (but by no means insignificant) government subjects such as education and agriculture. For the whole of British India a legislature was to be created, mainly on an elective basis, but with no powers over the Viceroy's government. Thus India was granted part-responsible government in the provinces only. This completely failed to satisfy Indian demands, and an unfortunately



severe suppression of disorders at Amritsar (1919) still further embittered relations. Under the guidance of Gandhi Congress adopted an attitude of non-co-operation and boycotted everything British.

In its efforts to find a solution the government dispatched Sir John Simon to India in 1928. Little emerged from his visit except a valuable account of the Indian problem, and in 1930 a Round Table Conference was summoned in London. After many tedious negotiations and discussions the Government of India Act (1935) was passed. This allowed full responsible self-government in the provinces, and provided for an all-India federation with large powers of self-government as soon as a sufficient number of the Indian princes agreed to join. India availed itself of its new opportunities in the provinces, and the Congress party soon controlled most of the eleven provincial governments. But all-India federation was still in the future when the Second World War intervened (1939). Indians resented the Viceroy's declaration of war without consulting Indian leaders, and in view of India's continued demand for self-government and the growing threat of Japanese invasion the British government in March, 1942, dispatched Sir Stafford Cripps to India with a new offer of complete self-government immediately after the war under a constitution drawn up by Indians themselves. Unfortunately, after three weeks' negotiations, the Indian leaders rejected the scheme, partly because it did not give them immediate powers, including control of defence, and partly on account of the old Hindu-Moslem rivalry, the Hindus opposing any plan that left the Moslems free to form a separate state. Later in the year the British Government ordered the arrest of Gandhi and other Congress leaders to prevent them from jeopardizing the country's security by a fresh civil disobedience campaign. At the same time it emphasized that the Cripps offer still held good.

### QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Describe the various stages by which the British government took over the control of India from the East India Company.



2. Write notes on the following: Warren Hastings, Marquis Wellesley, Lord Bentinck, Lord Dalhousie.
3. Describe the causes, events, and results of the Indian Mutiny.
4. Describe Britain's relations with Afghanistan in the nineteenth century.
5. Trace the development of India from 1858 to 1914.



## CHAPTER XX

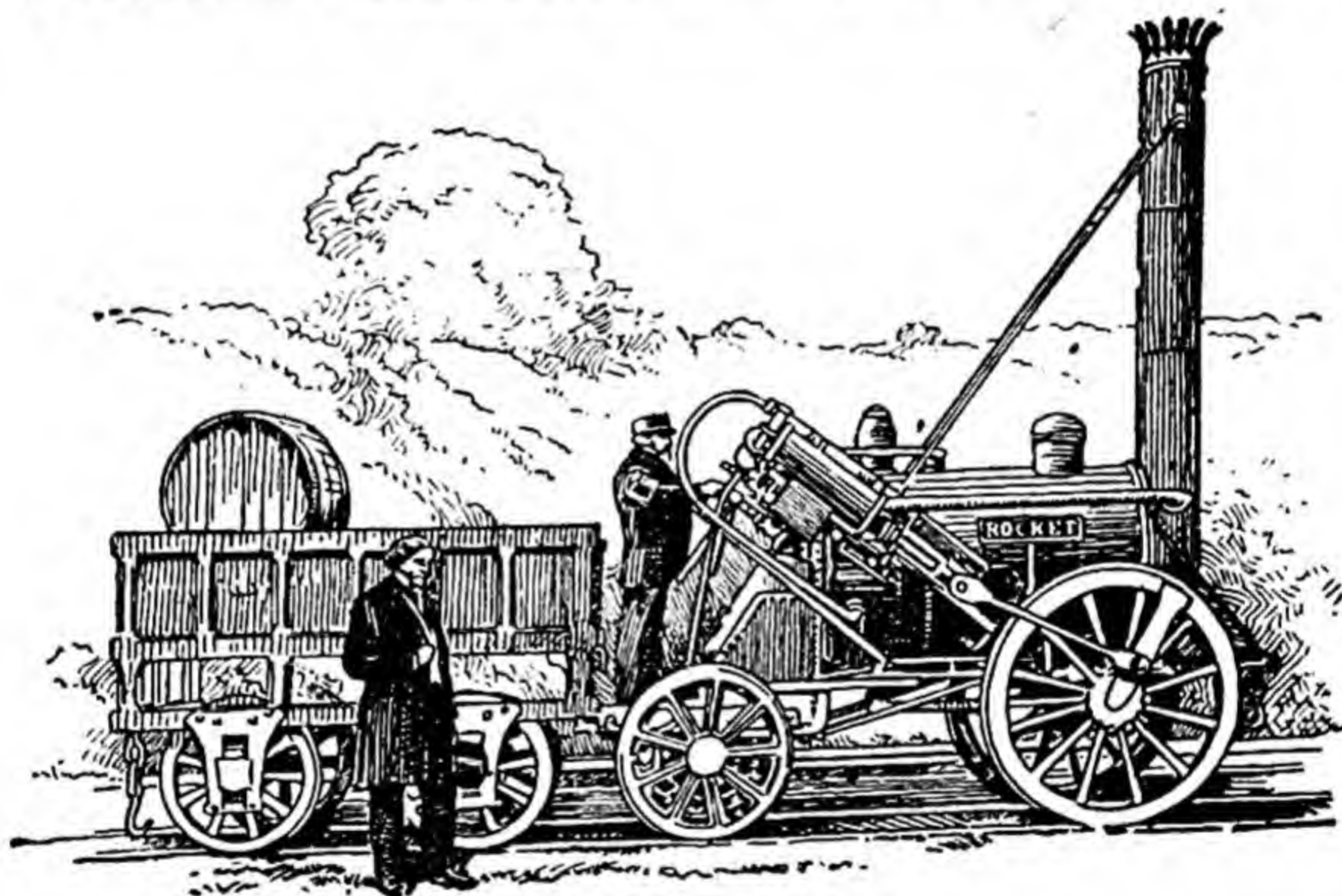
### ECONOMIC, TECHNICAL, AND SOCIAL CHANGES

*(Note: Some of the topics dealt with in this chapter have been unavoidably mentioned in preceding chapters. Where this is so, the most important references are given at the end of the relevant section in each case.)*

#### (A) ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENTS

##### **Transport and Communications: Railways**

ABOUT 1800 experiments were being made to adapt Watt's steam-engine to the purpose of transport. In 1801 a Cornishman, Trevithick, constructed a road locomotive which broke



THE ROCKET, 1830

Built by Stephenson to compete in a trial of locomotive engines for the Liverpool and Manchester Railway. The greatest speed it attained in the trial was 30 miles an hour, but some years later it ran at the rate of 53 miles an hour. The total weight of the engine and tender was only about  $7\frac{1}{2}$  tons.

*Reproduced from "European History" by Professor Hutton Webster*

down after four days, and in 1802 he laid down near present-day Euston Square a circular track over which ran a locomotive called "Catch-me-who-can." For a shilling a head the public could witness this modern miracle, and, if they dared, ride in the carriage behind. In 1814 George Stephenson, a collier's son, began his experiments with steam locomotion at



the Killingworth Colliery, Northumberland. In 1825 he constructed the Stockton and Darlington Railway to carry coals to the coast. In 1830 came the Liverpool and Manchester Railway (again constructed for goods traffic such as cotton and food) over which Stephenson's locomotive, the *Rocket*, ran at thirty miles an hour. The opening of this railway was marred by the fatal accident to William Huskisson. Stephenson was the real father of the railway. He chose the standard gauge of 4 ft. 8½ in. (based on the width between the old colliery rails), and after 1830 did much work in the Lancashire and Northumberland districts. His son, Robert Stephenson, built the tubular railway bridge over the Menai Straits.

Another father and son were the two Brunels. The father built the Thames Tunnel, and his more famous son, Isambard Kingdom Brunel, was engineer for the Great Western Railway. I. K. Brunel also began the beautiful Clifton Suspension Bridge. Typical of the haphazard way in which *laissez-faire* governments allowed the railways to grow up is the fact that Brunel chose the broad gauge of seven feet. Not till 1892 did the Great Western adopt the standard gauge throughout.

In the 1840's a veritable railway mania occurred. Speculation was encouraged by the projects of George Hudson, the 'railway king,' who believed that the end (railway construction) justified the means (deluding and swindling the investing public). In 1844 Parliament passed the Cheap Trains Act providing for third-class carriages at a penny a mile.

The railways met with much opposition from landowners and canal-companies, and from those who argued that the belching monsters would desecrate the countryside and even ruin the nation's milk supply by scaring the cows. Railways ended the canal age and created a new and important industry, giving rise to railway towns like Swindon and Crewe. British capital, engineers, and navvies built railways throughout the world. Goods and people could move about more quickly and cheaply, and flourishing holiday resorts like Brighton and Blackpool sprang up. As the century progressed the many lines amalgamated into a few large companies, and since 1890 a certain



amount of electrification has taken place, beginning with the London tubes, and now including important main lines.

### **Transport and Communications : Shipping**

The adaptation of steam-power to water-transport began quite as early as its use for land-transport. In 1801-1802, a steamship, the *Charlotte Dundas*, ran on the Forth and Clyde Canal. In 1807 the steam-driven *Clermont* was launched on the River Hudson in the U.S.A. In 1812 Henry Bell's famous *Comet* plied for hire on the Clyde. Gradually more ambitious journeys were attempted. In 1818 the *Savannah* arrived in Liverpool from New York; this vessel, like many of the early steamships, used sails as well as steam. In fact the *Savannah* was under steam for only eighty hours in twenty-nine days and was chased for a day by an Admiralty cutter which thought she was on fire. The first boat to cross the Atlantic under steam the whole way was the Canadian *Royal William*, which took twenty days from Nova Scotia to London (1833). In 1838 the Atlantic was thrice conquered by steam, the most famous journey being that of the *Great Western* in fourteen days. In the following year a Canadian, Samuel Cunard, obtained the North Atlantic postal contract, and in 1840 the first Cunarder sailed from Liverpool.

The complete victory of the steamship took much longer than that of the railway, partly due to the difficulties of coaling during long voyages and partly because of the excellence of the sailing vessels. At the beginning of the century the three-masted East Indiamen were unrivalled in the eastern trade. The second half of the century saw the fast sailing clippers (of which the *Cutty Sark* is the best known) that engaged in the China tea trade. During the years 1850 to 1880, however, sailing vessels were fighting a losing battle against steamships, which were constantly being improved. Wooden hulls were replaced by iron in the 1860's and (after the great steel inventions of Bessemer and others) by steel in the 1880's. After 1840 screw propellers replaced the early paddles. In the 1850's compound (and later triple expansion) engines economized fuel and made longer journeys possible. The Suez Canal after 1869 contri-



buted to the same end. Before its construction the sailing vessels of the Peninsular and Oriental line took passengers to the isthmus where they crossed overland to another vessel; the new canal rendered this method obsolete, but it was only suitable for steamships. After 1880 the introduction of chilling and freezing processes for food gave shipping a new significance in world trade. In 1894 Sir Charles Parsons fitted his first boat, the *Turbinia*, with a turbine engine which was perfected in 1897. In our own century oil and the internal combustion engine have partly replaced coal and steam-power.

Britain became the world's leading shipbuilder and ship-owner, and the yards of Glasgow, Birkenhead, and Belfast grew to be world-famous. After 1900 Germany wrested the 'blue ribbon' of the Atlantic from Britain till the Cunard Company built the *Mauretania* which, beginning in 1907, held the 'blue ribbon' for twenty-two years. Her fastest crossing (1929) was accomplished in 4 days 17 hours 50 minutes. In 1914 Britain possessed nearly half the world's iron and steel tonnage; since then her lead has declined, but she still holds first place with about one-quarter of the world's total.

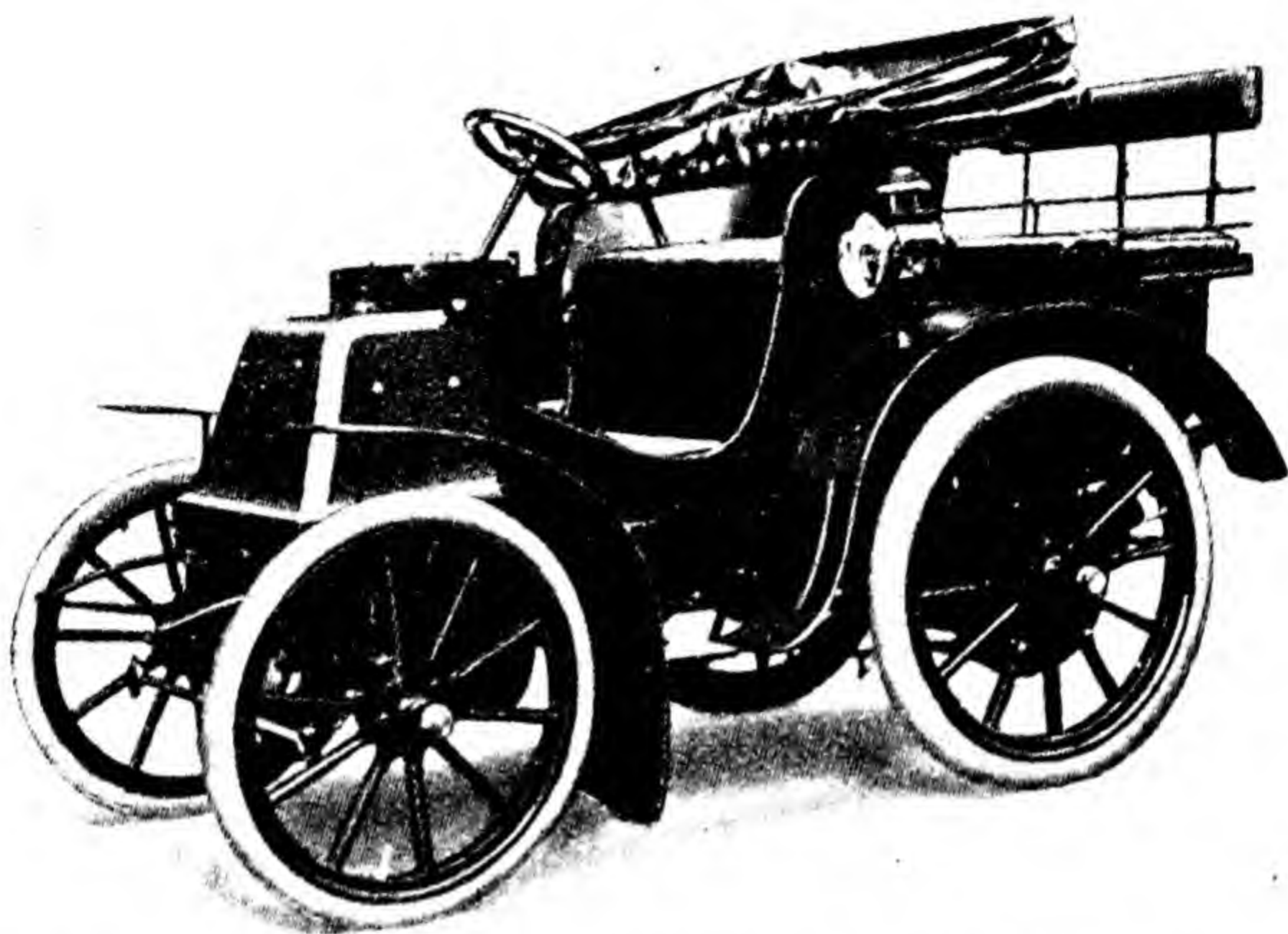
### **Transport and Communications : Later Developments**

After 1870 the bicycle was in use as a means of travel, the earliest models being of the penny-farthing variety; in the 1880's the safety model and pneumatic tyres (invented by Dunlop) were introduced. In the 1880's electric trams were developed, mainly in Germany. About 1887 a German named Daimler invented the internal combustion petrol engine. This led to the invention of the motor-car about ten years later by Lanchester, Austin, and others; motor-cars and electric trams proved in time serious competitors to the railways and brought road transport into its own again.

The petrol engine also made flying possible in heavier-than-air machines. Balloon ascents date from 1783; two years later the first cross-Channel balloon voyage was accomplished. In 1900 the German Count Zeppelin made his first voyage in a dirigible balloon. The aeroplane dates from 1903 when the



American brothers, Orville and Wilbur Wright, produced their first model. In 1909 a Frenchman, Blériot, first flew the Channel. The Great War stimulated developments, and in 1919



A 6-HORSE-POWER DAIMLER MADE FOR EDWARD VII IN 1900.

Alcock and Brown made the first transatlantic flight. Since then numerous records have been made—only to be broken again.

### **The Transmission of News**

Rowland Hill's penny postage in 1840 led to a tremendous expansion in letter-writing, both for business and pleasure. In 1837 Wheatstone and Cooke invented the magnetic needle telegraph, which, with the use of the code drawn up by Samuel Morse of America, made possible the development of the telegraph. In time submarine cables were laid, the most notable achievement being the Atlantic cable in 1865. Next came the telephone (1876–1880) which made possible the transmission of actual words over wires; it was the work mainly of Graham Bell (who invented the best receiver) and of the versatile American inventor, Edison (who invented the best transmitter).



At the turn of the century wireless communication was developed by the Italian, Marconi, working on the scientific discoveries of the German, Hertz. In 1899 the first message was transmitted across the Channel, and in 1901 across the Atlantic from Cornwall to Newfoundland. Wireless proved a boon to shipping and, through the radio, has now passed into common use.

### **Medical and Applied Science**

It is convenient here to record some of the other scientific achievements of the nineteenth century. In 1831 Michael Faraday laid the foundations of our knowledge of electricity when he succeeded in inducing an electric current. In the 1880's Edison in America and Swan in England introduced the incandescent filament electric lamp; they joined forces to patent the 'Ediswan' lamp, and gas-lighting, which had been introduced in the Napoleonic period, began to have a serious competitor. Edison was also largely responsible for the invention of the earliest moving pictures, which led to the modern cinematograph. Photography of still subjects dates from about 1840, being based on the earlier experiments of the Frenchmen Daguerre and Niepce. Medical science made tremendous strides. In 1847 Dr Simpson of Edinburgh discovered the anæsthetic properties of chloroform. The French surgeon Louis Pasteur in the second half of the century made researches into the nature of disease and bacteria. His discoveries led to inoculation and the use of antiseptics, the latter being first used for operations by Lord Lister of Glasgow. In the 1890's the German Röntgen discovered X-rays, and Sir Ronald Ross (born in India of Scottish parents) traced malaria to the mosquito. Just after 1900 the French scientist, Pierre Curie, and his Polish-born wife, Madame Curie, discovered radium and its properties. Scientific advance—the distinguishing feature of modern civilization—is thus truly international in its origins.

### **Industry and Trade**

The chief British industries in the nineteenth century were agriculture, textiles, engineering, shipbuilding, coal-mining,



and iron and steel. Among textiles cotton easily held first place, drawing raw materials from the U.S.A. (and after the cotton famine of the American Civil War of 1861-1865 from Egypt, Africa, and India) and selling its products throughout the world, particularly in India and China. About 1830 a new textile industry, jute, was developed at Dundee. Britain was the home of engineering and machine-making, which received an impetus after 1824 by the removal of the ancient ban on the export of machinery. Side by side a machine-tool industry grew up to supply the mother-industry with instruments of precision; about 1800 Henry Maudslay invented the lathe, and fifty years later James Nasmyth the steam-hammer. The basis of Britain's industrial supremacy lay in her coal-fields, but it was not till after 1900 that mechanical coal-cutters began to be used. The most important changes, constituting almost a second industrial revolution, took place in the iron and steel industry. In 1856 Bessemer invented the converter process of producing malleable steel; in 1865 Siemens brought out the rival open-hearth method. Both these processes were suitable only for acid iron ores, but in 1878 Gilchrist Thomas invented a process of transforming phosphoric ores into basic steel. This enabled Britain to use her native Middlesbrough ores, and Germany those of Lorraine. The result of these inventions was to replace the wrought iron of Cort's puddling process by cheap steel products—rails, bridges, ships, machine-parts, and numerous household articles.

In the nineteenth century Britain was the 'workshop of the world,' drawing upon foreign nations for her food and raw materials and supplying them with manufactured goods. But by the end of the century Britain had been surpassed by the U.S.A. and Germany in steel production and by the U.S.A. in coal-mining, and in the twentieth century many of her cotton markets in the east were lost to Japan.

In 1815 Britain produced the bulk of her wheat, and as late as 1850 still supplied about seven-eighths of her needs; before the outbreak of war in 1939 she was producing about one-fifth. In 1815 her total exports were valued at £50,000,000,



and her imports at £34,000,000. In 1939 exports amounted to £440,000,000. The leading exports in order of value were textiles (of which the great bulk were cottons), iron and steel goods, machinery, and coal. Britain's imports in 1939 amounted to £885,000,000, of which £400,000,000 covered food and drink and £240,000,000 raw materials and partly manufactured articles. The vast difference between her exports and imports is accounted for by Britain's 'invisible' exports arising from her overseas investments and her shipping and financial services for foreign countries.

### **Agriculture**

Agriculture had benefited from the high prices of the Napoleonic Wars, but with the peace of 1815 it was threatened with foreign competition. The Corn Law of 1815, passed to counter this competition, remained (with modifications) on the statute book till 1846. But agriculture failed to prosper, suffering from high rates and wildly fluctuating prices. The repeal of the Corn Laws did not ruin agriculture; indeed the next thirty years (1846-1876) were a 'golden age.' It was a period of rising prices following gold discoveries in Australia and California, while the railways cheapened the cost of carriage. The Crimean War and the American Civil War retarded possible competition and created scarcity. After 1875 the great depression set in, affecting not only industry but, still more, agriculture. Prices fell all round, but the farmer found himself in the worst plight because of new sources of competition. The extension of railways in North America opened up the prairie provinces of the U.S.A. and Canada, while the use of cold storage and canning brought meat and meat products from the Americas and Australia. In time the farmer adapted himself to the new situation by concentrating on local and specialized work like dairy farming, market gardening, fruit-growing, and the raising of pedigree stock. After 1900 the position somewhat improved. The Great War of 1914 brought war-time scarcity again, but with the peace another period of depression followed. The Second World War is repeating the story of 1914-1918. Will the result-



ing peace bring another depression? (See *pp.* 140, 142, 147, 165-167 for the Corn Laws.)

### (B) SOCIAL AND WORKING-CONDITIONS

#### **The New Towns and Factories**

Industrial England was born at a time when governments believed in doing nothing to curb the economic activities of their subjects. Consequently large towns developed without plan; houses were built back-to-back with no gardens; sanitary arrangements were non-existent or inadequate; street-lighting and paving were often unprovided for and in many cases water-supplies were not laid on. Insanitary conditions produced many cholera epidemics. Hours of work were extremely long and wages often low. Women and young children were widely employed because of their cheapness. Small children who should have been in the nursery cleaned the machinery in textile mills; in coal-mines they acted as 'trappers,' opening and closing the ventilation-doors, while women were harnessed to trucks of coal. Many of the mill-children were pauper apprentices whom the workhouse authorities were only too glad to turn over to someone else. Accidents frequently resulted from the unfenced machinery and the lack of precautions in mines. Despite the Truck Act of 1831 many workers were paid in tommy-tickets which they had to exchange for goods at a shop under their employer's control where they were often defrauded. It should always be remembered, however, that bad living- and working-conditions existed before the Industrial Revolution as well as after.

#### **Reformers and Critics**

Voices were raised from the outset against the evils of the new industrialism. Robert Owen rose from humble Welsh origins to be manager and part-owner of the cotton mills at New Lanark. Here he introduced good working- and housing-conditions and established an attractive school for the workers' children. He showed that large profits could be made even



though hours were reduced and wages raised, and his factory attracted visitors from all over Europe. Owen worked after 1815 to obtain Factory Acts, and after 1830 to teach the workers self-help through trade unions and co-operative societies (see later). Lord Ashley (Earl of Shaftesbury) devoted a long life (1801–1885) to helping the downtrodden and defenceless. Inspired by a true Christian outlook, he laboured incessantly to humanize the lunacy laws, pass Factory Acts, improve conditions in the mines, and protect the boy chimney sweeps. He founded ragged schools for destitute children.

The pen proved a powerful instrument in exposing evils and shaking the complacency of governments and the well-to-do. The novels of Charles Dickens emphasized above all the human side of social problems. In *Pickwick Papers* he ridiculed the absurdities of the law in the famous Bardell *versus* Pickwick case. *Nicholas Nickleby* exposed the inefficiency of many boarding-schools as exemplified in the imaginary Dotheboys Hall. *Oliver Twist* attacked the harshness of the Poor Law of 1834. *Hard Times* stressed the unsympathetic nature of the new industrialism and of its hard-headed captains or Mr 'Gradgrinds.' In *Little Dorrit* prison-life is depicted and the red tape of government departments ridiculed in the Circumlocution Office. In the middle years of the century other novelists joined in the attack. Mrs Gaskell's *Mary Barton* is a story of the Manchester slums and of the Chartist movement. The injustices that had produced Chartism (factory and mining-conditions, the truck system, the gulf between rich and poor) provided the theme for Disraeli's *Sybil, or The Two Nations*. The Christian Socialist parson, Charles Kingsley, described the degradation of the country labourer in *Yeast*, the sad life of little chimney sweeps in *Water-Babies*, and the sweating-conditions of the tailoring-trade in *Alton Locke*. In *Punch* appeared Thomas Hood's poem *The Song of a Shirt*:

With fingers weary and worn,  
With eyelids heavy and red,  
A woman sat in unwomanly rags.  
Plying her needle and thread—



Stitch—stitch—stitch!

In poverty, hunger, and dirt,

And still with a voice of dolorous pitch

She sang the 'Song of the Shirt.'

In 1860 *Unto This Last*, a series of essays by John Ruskin, passionately attacked Britain's pursuit of wealth to the neglect of the welfare of her people. Slowly improvements came either from above or from the efforts of the workers themselves.

### **State-Help: Factory Acts**

In 1802 Sir Robert Peel, father of the famous statesman, secured the passage of the Health and Morals of Apprentices Act. This applied only to pauper apprentices in cotton and woollen mills, limiting their hours to twelve a day, abolishing night work, and making provisions for the cleanliness and health of the children. This first act was thus partly an extension of the poor laws. The next act in 1819 was largely due to the efforts of Robert Owen and applied to *all* children in cotton factories. Children under nine were not to be employed at all; from nine to sixteen they were limited to twelve hours a day exclusive of meals. The next important act was that of 1833, due largely to the efforts of Richard Oastler, Michael Sadler, and Lord Shaftesbury. It applied to all textile mills and continued the prohibition of work under the age of nine. Children from nine to thirteen were limited to a nine-hour day and were to receive part-time schooling; young persons from thirteen to eighteen were limited to twelve hours. Night work was prohibited in both cases. Above all, four full-time factory inspectors were appointed, thus remedying the fact that previous laws had often not been enforced. In 1842 Shaftesbury secured the Coal Mines Regulation Act which forbade the employment in mines of women or of children under ten. The 1840's were occupied with the famous 'ten hours' agitation in which John Fielden played a prominent part. The result was the Ten Hours Act of 1847, which limited the daily working-hours of women and young persons to ten. A further act in 1850 restricted the times during which these ten hours could



be chosen. By this time the principle of *laissez-faire* had been abandoned, and henceforth factory legislation is largely the consolidation and extension of principles already recognized.

Important consolidating acts were passed in 1878, by Disraeli, and in 1901 and 1937. At the end of the nineteenth century acts were passed dealing with occupational diseases, and in 1911 a weekly half-holiday for shop assistants was prescribed. The Trade Boards Act of 1909 introduced the principle of regulating wages in the 'sweated' industries, a principle considerably extended in 1918. During the Great War (1917) agricultural wages were regulated, and although the act was repealed in 1921, it was re-enacted in 1924 so that nowadays every county has its Agricultural Wages Committee. (See also *pp.* 155, 164, 198, 216.)

### **State-Help: Public Health and Local Government**

Public health covers a variety of topics such as street-lighting, paving, sewage, disposal of refuse, water-supply, housing, infectious diseases, medical and dental inspection of children, and so on. The most notable public health reformer was Edwin Chadwick, the secretary of the Poor Law Commissioners of 1834, and the first important measure was the Public Health Act of 1848, which established a central Board of Health and permitted local authorities (unless the death-rate was high, in which case they were compelled) to establish local boards of health. The main objects were to provide water-supply, main drainage, and street cleaning. But Chadwick was not a tactful reformer and after ten years the original scheme expired. In 1872 a further Public Health Act divided the country into sanitary districts and gave certain powers to local authorities. These were extended by Disraeli's important Public Health Act of 1875, which together with his Artisans' Dwellings Act of the same year, laid the foundation-stones for further developments. Every sanitary authority had to appoint a medical officer of health, a surveyor, and a sanitary inspector to supervise the numerous duties now or previously laid upon local authorities. In 1894 these powers were transferred to the newly created district councils. Soon after 1900 the schools began to be used as



centres for improving the health of the growing generation—work with which the name of Sir George Newman will be forever associated. In 1911 came Lloyd George's National Health Insurance scheme, and in 1919 the Ministry of Health was created to take over the functions of the old Local Government Board.

In 1800 the counties were managed by the nominated Justices of the Peace, the parishes by overseers, constables, and churchwardens, the towns by mayors and corporations still chosen by medieval methods. In 1834 the Poor Law Amendment Act superseded the overseers as poor law authorities by elected boards of guardians. The Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 created the modern town councils. In 1888 elected county councils were created to take over the administrative work of the magistrates, and in 1894 district councils were established and an attempt made to revive the parish. By various steps these new authorities obtained wide powers, taking over the duties of the old authorities and also those belonging to special bodies such as Police Commissioners and School Boards. In 1929 an important Local Government Act was passed which overhauled the whole system. Boundary adjustments were made, the boards of guardians surrendered their powers to the county authorities (working through public assistance committees) industry and agriculture were relieved of much or all of their rate-burden, and an attempt was made to help poorer areas by carefully calculated government 'block' grants to local authorities instead of percentage grants based upon what the authority had spent.

(See also *pp.* 198, 215–218 for Public Health, and *pp.* 157–158, 196, 208–211, 312 for Local Government.)

### **State and Self-help: Education**

Despite the existence of the old-established public and grammar schools and the private and dame-schools run for profit, there were no proper educational facilities for the working-classes in 1800. The first move came from religious bodies, beginning with the establishment of Sunday Schools by Robert



Raikes of Gloucester in 1780. In 1811 Dr Bell founded the Church of England National Society, and in 1812 Joseph Lancaster the Nonconformist British and Foreign School Society. These voluntary bodies depended upon private subscriptions and endowments, and they used the monitorial system by which the more advanced pupils taught the others. From the beginning the National Society, with its larger resources, possessed by far the greater number of schools.

In 1833 the government gave its first material help when it granted £20,000 to the voluntary societies. In time the grant increased, and in 1839 a special committee of the Privy Council was charged with its administration. Soon followed government inspection which led to the establishment of the pupil-teacher system, aided by State grants, and later (1861) to the system called 'payment by results.' Under this scheme government inspectors recommended grants to the voluntary schools based upon the examination of every scholar in the '3 R's' (reading, writing, and arithmetic). This acted for thirty years as a blight upon real education since it led to much unhealthy cramming.

After the Reform Act of 1867 the need was felt for educating the working-classes. The voluntary schools had increased their activities considerably since their beginning, but they still catered for only about one-half of the nation's children. Forster's Elementary Education Act of 1870 filled the gap. In districts where voluntary schools were insufficient the rate-payers were to elect school boards whose duty it was to provide elementary education for children from five to thirteen years, with the power of compulsion if the boards so desired. The early school attendance officers had a trying time; healthy children were hurriedly popped into bed 'ill,' or strong boys at work were reported dead! Voluntary schools continued with increased government grants, while the new board schools were financed out of the rates with government grants added. Religious controversy was settled by providing for undenominational Bible teaching in board schools, and inserting the 'conscience clause' for voluntary schools. In 1876 elementary education



was made compulsory throughout the country, and in 1891 it was made free. In 1899 the Board of Education was established. The present-day system was created by Balfour's Education Act of 1902. The school boards were abolished and their powers over elementary education transferred to counties, county boroughs, and the larger boroughs and urban district councils. The county authorities were also made responsible for building secondary schools and extending technical schools, and they could establish teachers' training colleges. Scholarships could be provided to build a ladder from the elementary school to the university. Religious controversy unfortunately flared up again when the voluntary schools were given grants out of the local rates. After the Great War efforts were made to provide part-time education after fourteen, and later to regroup elementary schools into junior and senior departments.

In the nineteenth century the old monopoly of Oxford and Cambridge was challenged by the establishment of London University (1828) followed in succeeding decades by the provincial universities. The development of women's education has already been described on *pp.* 220–222. Adult education was furthered by mechanics' institutes in most of the large towns and by the establishment of the Working Men's College in London in 1854. In 1873 Cambridge began the university extension movement and in 1903 the Workers' Educational Association was founded. Nor must less tangible changes be overlooked. Dr Arnold, Headmaster of Rugby 1828–1842, led a reform of the public schools by increasing the variety of subjects taught and above all by emphasizing the importance of character-building in education. (See also *pp.* 156, 195–198, 212.)

### **Self-Help: Trade Unionism**

Although trade unions date from the end of the seventeenth century, until the Industrial Revolution they existed on only a small scale. The Industrial Revolution provided an impetus by congregating workers into factories and towns and by widening the gulf between rich and poor. The Anti-Combination Acts of 1799 and 1800 forbade associations of both



masters and men, but in practice they were only applied to the latter. The prosecution of *The Times* printers in 1810 led Francis Place, the Charing Cross tailor, to work for the repeal of these acts. In 1824-1825 he secured his object by obtaining a Parliamentary inquiry and mixing up the question with other matters such as the export of machinery. For the next fifty years trade unions, though not illegal, were not recognized by the law, and they could still be hampered in various ways.

In the 1830's trade unionism under the influence of Robert Owen took on a revolutionary character. Attempts were made to form huge nation-wide unions with the vague aim of calling a general strike and taking over the nation's industry in the interests of the workers. The outstanding example was Robert Owen's Grand National Consolidated Trades Union (1834). In the same year six farm labourers of Tolpuddle, near Dorchester, made a harmless attempt to form a union and engaged in the elaborate ritual that characterized the unions of this period. Under an act passed at the time of the naval mutinies of 1797 they were charged with administering illegal oaths and were sentenced to seven years' transportation. Widespread agitation succeeded in obtaining the return of most of the men after four years. The Tolpuddle case and the over-ambitious aims of the Grand National soon ended this revolutionary period.

After 1840 the 'New Model' period began, so called because the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (formed definitely in 1851) was the new model for trade union organization. Small compact unions were organized with limited aims such as legal reform. High contributions were levied to build up funds, provide friendly benefits and pay officials. Strikes were discouraged, the unions relying upon constitutional means and the publicity of lectures and magazines to win their aims. In 1860 trades councils containing representatives from local trade unions were begun, and eight years later the first national Trade Union Congress was held. Legal questions occupied much attention, especially when the *Hornby versus Close* case of 1867 decided that trade union funds were not protected by law and that the unions could not obtain legal protection by registering



as friendly societies. A Royal Commission in 1867, appointed after certain outrages at Sheffield, reported that trade unions were not so dangerous as their enemies alleged, but the commission was by no means unanimous in its recommendations. In 1871 Gladstone's government passed two important acts. The Trade Union Act allowed unions to protect their funds by registering as friendly societies. The Criminal Law Amendment Act imposed heavy penalties on picketing, thus making strikes almost impossible. Seven women were imprisoned under the act for saying "Bah!" to a 'blackleg' in South Wales. The workers voted against Gladstone in the 1874 election, and Disraeli in 1875 made trade unions and peaceful picketing legal for the first time by his Employers and Workmen Acts.

In the seventies and eighties a 'New Unionism' developed and was characterized by efforts to organize the unskilled workers into big industrial unions, by large strikes, and by socialist schemes. In 1872 Joseph Arch began the difficult task of organizing the agricultural labourers. In 1889 occurred the famous strike of the London dockers for sixpence an hour. Their leaders, John Burns, Tom Mann, and Ben Tillett, won public sympathy for the dockers, who with financial support from many quarters, including Australia, eventually gained their main demands.

Since 1874 trade unions and other labour bodies had been returning members to Parliament, and these had usually acted with the Liberal party; but in 1900 the Labour Representation Committee (forerunner of the Labour Party) was formed. In 1900-1901 the Taff Vale case again imperilled union funds. The Labour Party supported the Liberals who in 1906 reversed the Taff Vale decision in the Trades Disputes Act. In 1909 the Osborne judgment prevented unions from using their funds for political purposes, but this again was remedied by the Trade Union Act of 1913 which sanctioned a political levy with the right of every member to 'contract out.' During the anxious years 1910 to 1914 large strikes by miners, railwaymen, dockers, and others threatened the nation's life. Big unions became fashionable again; in 1911 was formed the National Transport



Federation, in 1913 the National Union of Railwaymen, and in 1914 the Triple Alliance of miners, railwaymen, and transport workers.

The trade unions, like the suffragettes, buried their grievances during the Great War, and Labour members served in the coalition government. Post-war distress and unemployment produced a revival of trade union unrest which culminated in the General Strike in 1926. The result was a fresh Trade Union Act in 1927. Henceforth general strikes and sympathetic strikes were illegal and civil servants were not allowed to link up with other unions. Labour's finances were injured by the provision that henceforth no trade unionist should pay the political levy unless he 'contracted in' to do so. This act aroused much resentment but so far (1942) has remained on the statute book. (See also *pp.* 131, 132, 159-162, 196-197, 211-212, 215-217, 219, 312.)

### **Self-Help: Friendly Societies and Co-operation**

Friendly societies are really mutual insurance clubs formed by the poorer classes to provide against sickness, death, and other emergencies. They stimulate thrift, which the government itself encouraged when in 1861 it created the Post Office Savings Bank. The Victorian age was the heyday of the Friendly Societies, but they still perform useful work and help to administer the National Insurance Act of 1911.

The early Co-operative movement owed much to the inspiration of Robert Owen, whose own schemes of co-operative production, however, proved to be failures. In 1844 the Rochdale Pioneers, some of whom were Owenites, founded the modern consumers' Co-operative movement. Twenty-eight men subscribed £1 each to open a shop in Toad Lane, Rochdale. They bought wholesale and sold at retail prices, and had the happy notion of distributing their profits to members in proportion to their purchases. Thus arose the dividend which represents the cutting-out of middlemen's profits. In 1863 the Co-operative Wholesale Society (C.W.S.) was established, followed five years later by a separate Scottish Society. The Co-operative move-



ment has not confined itself to trade; it has its own political party and engages in useful educational and social work. In 1935 there were over 1000 separate retail societies with a total membership of nearly seven and a half millions; their trade amounted to £219,000,000—which is estimated to be about one-tenth of the total retail trade of the country.

### **A Balance-sheet of Social Progress**

Despite the many difficulties in comparing one age with another, it can safely be asserted that the average person is materially much better off than his ancestors of a century or more ago. Shorter working-hours, wider opportunities for travel and recreation, educational facilities, increases in scientific and medical knowledge, higher wages—all these are but a few of the evidences of material advance. Figures tell the same tale. In 1851–1855 the total death-rate was twenty-three per thousand; in 1931–1934 it was twelve. In 1851–1855 the infant-mortality rate under one year of age was 156 per thousand; in 1931–1934, sixty-four. Careful calculation has also shown that from 1790 to 1910 money wages increased about two and a half times, while prices fell about twenty-five per cent., thus giving an increase in real wages of about three times.

It should be remembered, however, that much of this progress has existed side by side with dire poverty. In 1889 Charles Booth showed in his *Life and Labour of the People of London* that thirty per cent. of the inhabitants of the richest city in the world lived in poverty. Investigations in York by Seebohm Rowntree tell the same tale. His first survey in 1899, published in *Poverty and Progress*, showed that fifteen and a half per cent. of the population was subject to severe poverty. A second similar survey in 1936 showed that this figure had fallen to under seven per cent., an indication both of what has already been achieved and of what still remains to be done.

### **QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES**

1. Outline the chief developments in means of transport since 1800.



2. State the main facts concerning (a) the factory acts, (b) public health legislation, (c) local government changes.
3. Describe the development of State control of education since 1833.
4. Outline the development of trade unionism since 1800.
5. Write notes on: Tolpuddle Labourers, Robert Owen, Lord Shaftesbury, Rochdale Pioneers, the Great Depression after 1875.
6. Write down the name of one person associated with each of the following: electricity, antiseptics, cheap steel, telephone, tropical medicine, wireless.
7. Turn to the following books for illustrative reading:  
*Nicholas Nickleby*, for life at Dotheboys Hall.  
*Hard Times*, for education under the new industrialism.  
*Mary Barton*, for working-class conditions in the new towns.  
*Alton Locke*, for conditions in the tailoring trade.  
*Sybil*, Book III, for the truck system.  
*Sybil*, Book IV, for trade union ceremonial.



## CHAPTER XXI

### CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENTS

#### **Literature: The Romantic Revival**

CULTURAL and literary developments fall very broadly into three main periods: the Romantic Revival, the Victorian Age, and the Twentieth Century. The writers of the Romantic Revival looked to simple Nature for their subjects, or in many cases they returned to the past—not to ancient Greece or Rome but to the Middle Ages whose knights and damsels, ballads and courts they idealized, forgetting in their enthusiasm the disease and poverty of medieval life. They expressed themselves in simple and spontaneous language and refused to be bound by a few set forms.

Robert Burns (1759–1796), the national poet of Scotland, wrote straight from the heart, choosing as subjects the common folk and experiences of everyday life. His songs, such as *Auld Lang Syne*, have long since become part of our national heritage. Simplicity also characterizes the songs and poems of William Blake, whose *Jerusalem* can still stir English gatherings. The Romantic Revival begins in earnest with the publication in 1798 of the *Lyrical Ballads*, the joint product of William Wordsworth (1770–1850) and Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834). It contained Coleridge's masterpiece, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. Wordsworth as a young man had hailed the French Revolution, but he was more interested in nature than in politics, in flowers and trees than in men. Most of his life was spent in the Lake District away from human distractions. Among his masterpieces are *Tintern Abbey*, *The Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*, and *The Prelude*.

Three other poets reached their flowering period in early life, only tragically to be cut short. John Keats (1795–1821), whose *Odes* are unmatched for their beauty of thought and imagery, died of consumption. Shelley (1792–1822) was a poet of revolt who slashed at the politics and religion of his time. Lord Byron



(1788-1824), the author of *Childe Harold*, died helping the Greeks to win their independence.

In Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) can be seen the revived interest in the Middle Ages. Soaked in the ballads and legends of the Scottish border, he produced his own ballad-like poems, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* and *Marmion*. In 1814 appeared his first novel, *Waverley*; during the next fifteen years Scott wrote about thirty others, mostly on historical themes.

### Literature: The Victorian Age

Victorian literature may be regarded as beginning with the publication in 1836 of *Pickwick Papers* by Charles Dickens. Dickens (1812-1870) was born of humble parentage and the hardships of his early life were increased by his father's spendthrift habits. His novels deal almost entirely with the common people. *David Copperfield* is largely autobiographical, and Mr Micawber, who was always waiting "for something to turn up," is a portrait of his father. His great contemporary, William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863), enjoyed the advantages of wealth and education that Dickens lacked. Anthony Trollope wrote novels of English clerical and provincial life. Robert Louis Stevenson drew upon history, romance, and adventure for his themes; his *Treasure Island*, perhaps the greatest boys' book ever written, appeared in 1883. Among women novelists were the Brontë sisters and George Eliot.

Poetry achieved widespread popularity in the hands of Lord Tennyson (1809-1892). In his tremendous faith in God's purpose Tennyson mirrored his age:

Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one increasing purpose runs,  
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process of the suns.

After the publication of *In Memoriam* (1850) he was made Poet Laureate in succession to Wordsworth and was always ready to commemorate events of national importance, whether it were the death of the Duke of Wellington, the Charge of the Light Brigade, or the Queen's first Jubilee. Tennyson's greatest contemporary was Robert Browning (1812-1889).



Historical, political, and economic writers include John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer, Lord Macaulay, Carlyle, Froude, and J. R. Green. Macaulay and Spencer accepted and glorified the achievements of their age.



ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881), writing with the fervour of an Old Testament prophet, lashed his generation for its neglect of spiritual values in its hurried scramble after material wealth. He was followed by his more polished but equally passionate disciple, John Ruskin (1819–1900), who hated the ugliness of Victorian civilization with its cheap machine-made goods, its drab industrial towns, and the elaborate ornamentation which it mistook for beauty. William Morris (1834–1896),

like Ruskin, deplored the ugliness around him; he sought refuge in making wallpapers, tapestries, and lettering of his own design, in writing of medieval romance, and in depicting an ideal Socialist state in his *News from Nowhere*. Thomas Hardy (1840–1928) produced in the last thirty years of the century his *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and other novels of Wessex life.

### Literature: The Twentieth Century

Towards the end of the century there appeared new writers who reached their zenith after 1900. H. G. Wells, beginning with scientific stories such as *The Invisible Man*, passed to novels of social life and thence to schemes of social reform and modern Utopias. The outstanding feature of the new age was the revival of play-writing, which had languished during the nineteenth century. George Bernard Shaw used the play as a vehicle for attacking the social conventions of his time, John Galsworthy similarly to assail the cruelty and stupidity of many of our laws and institutions. Galsworthy also achieved fame as a novelist, and his *Forsyte Saga* is a remarkable picture of several



generations of English middle-class life. J. M. Barrie's fanciful plays such as *Peter Pan* served to relieve the seriousness of other writers. In John Masefield appeared a writer equally at home with plays and novels, but excelling above all in poetry. Other writers, whose work it is impossible to summarize, have contributed to all forms of literature; they include Arnold Bennett, Rupert Brooke, Robert Bridges, W. B. Yeats, and T. S. Eliot.

The present century has also witnessed a revolution in the press. The repeal of the newspaper tax in 1855 and the abolition of the paper duties in 1861 led to a cheapening of newspapers and periodicals which placed them within the reach of the working man. But newspapers still catered primarily for the middle and upper classes till near the end of the century. Then were founded popular magazines like *Tit-Bits* and *Answers*. In 1896 Alfred Harmsworth (Lord Northcliffe) launched the *Daily Mail*, eminently suited to the new reading public which liked its news well-spiced. In 1900 Pearson followed suit with the *Daily Express*, and four years later Harmsworth produced in the *Daily Mirror* the first cheap picture paper.

### **Painting and Music**

At the beginning of the nineteenth century painting was represented by Raeburn, who painted portraits of Sir Walter Scott and other notables, and by Lawrence who chose statesmen and kings as his subjects. Crome founded the Norwich school of landscape painting. These were followed by Constable (1776-1837), who portrayed in a Wordsworthian spirit simple English landscapes, and by Turner (1775-1851), one of the world's great masters of colour. In the middle of the century a group of artists, including Rossetti, Holman Hunt, and Millais, formed the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood; their work was based on early Italian models, their subjects were religion or an over-romanticized medievalism, and they relied on accuracy of minute detail. Other painters of note were Watts, Leighton, and Landseer, the latter specializing in animal subjects as in his popular *Dignity and Impudence*. Towards the end of the century the American-born painter, Whistler, began



the revolt against the photographic style of painting, a revolt which in modern times has led to the rise of many curious schools.

In musical composition Britain produced little of note till near the end of the century. In 1858 Sir Charles Hallé of German origin began the famous Hallé Concerts which made Manchester a European centre of music. The first Promenade Concert at Queen's Hall, London, was held in 1894. After 1880 musical composition was revived by Parry and by Sullivan, the latter collaborating with the writer Gilbert to produce the popular series of light operas. Soon Sir Edward Elgar with his *Enigma Variations* and other works raised British music to the first rank, and after 1900 Cecil Sharp began collecting the old folk-songs of England before modern civilization destroyed them.

## Architecture

Material advance and a growing population naturally made the nineteenth century an age of building. New and expanding towns called for houses, churches, chapels, schools, libraries, and town halls; new travel facilities demanded railway stations, hotels, and post offices. Much of the new building was ugly and ornate, revealing a commercialism with little artistic taste.

In general, nineteenth-century architecture was imitative of classical or Gothic models. During the Regency period after 1810, John Nash built Regent Street and the Marble Arch and laid out Regent's Park in accordance with classical forms. The Gothic revival, which fitted in with the medievalism of the romantic revival, was seen in the new Houses of Parliament, built by Sir Charles Barry after the destruction of the old buildings by fire in 1834. At the end of the century the Roman Catholic cathedral at Westminster struck a new note by reviving Byzantine architecture. In the twentieth century attempts have been made to create new styles free from the fancy-dress trappings of past ages.



## Religious Movements

The nineteenth century, in marked contrast to the eighteenth, was an age of firm religious belief and of strict religious observance. Nearly every great Victorian was influenced by high moral and religious motives. Gladstone is an obvious example. The Bible and other religious works such as *Pilgrim's Progress* were not only to be found in most houses; they were frequently read. Sunday was devoted to church-going and family prayers, entertainments and outings being considered irreligious. It is noteworthy that the Victorian age produced in 1885 the Revised Version of the Bible.

Since its formation under Elizabeth the Church of England has usually contained three broadly defined parties: the Low Church or Evangelical party, the High Church party, and the Broad Church party.

For the first thirty years of the nineteenth century the Evangelicals were the most prominent, being in fact a result largely of the Methodist revival. They included the 'Clapham Sect' of Wilberforce, Clarkson, and Thornton, and also the 'good' Lord Shaftesbury. In the middle of the century the Christian Socialists exhibited many of the features of the Broad Church party; Charles Kingsley, Frederick Denison Maurice, and Thomas Hughes (the author of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*) were inclined to be tolerant in outlook and up-to-date in belief.

It was the High Church party which, through the Oxford Movement, created the biggest stir in the middle of the century. This movement was begun at Oxford in 1833 by Keble, Newman, and Pusey, who soon set forth their views in a series of *Tracts for the Times*. They emphasized the corporate nature and the privileges of the Church and opposed all claims of State interference. They placed great store by Church tradition and the powers of the clergy, and in time developed a ceremonial and ritual which harked back to the Middle Ages. Above all they maintained that the Reformation was a mere incident which had not altered the fundamental nature of the English Church; the latter was still part of the great Catholic Church



brought to England by Saint Augustine, and its clergy could trace their spiritual powers back through apostolic succession to Christ's disciples. These views naturally provoked in many minds the old suspicion of Rome—a suspicion which seemed justified when Newman in *Tract 90* argued that the Thirty-nine Articles of the English Church were quite consistent with Catholic beliefs. In 1845 Newman took the final plunge and joined the Church of Rome in which he later became a Cardinal. Newman was one of the finest intellects of his age. He defended his action in his *Apologia*, and composed many well-known hymns of which *Lead, Kindly Light* and *Praise to the Holiest* are still popular. Keble and Pusey remained Anglicans, but others, such as Manning, followed Newman's example.

The Oxford Movement coincided with the efforts of Pope Pius IX to reintroduce Catholic bishops into England with titles named after the old dioceses which in many cases were the same as those of Anglican bishops. This was regarded as a direct challenge to the English Church, and Lord John Russell, under the influence of 'No Popery,' passed the Ecclesiastical Titles Act (1851) to prevent it. But the act proved difficult to enforce and was soon abandoned. In 1874 Disraeli passed the Public Worship Regulation Act which aimed at compelling Anglo-Catholic clergy to abandon the ritual that they had adopted as a result of the Oxford Movement; but this too proved impossible to enforce.

In 1843 the Scottish Presbyterian Church was rent in two, when Dr Chalmers and nearly 500 ministers left it to form the Free Church of Scotland. Their quarrel was over the method of appointing ministers, who in the older church were often chosen by lay patrons in opposition to the wishes of the congregations. In 1878 William Booth founded the Salvation Army, distinguished for its evangelism and its social and religious work among the poor.

### **Scientific Thought**

In the second half of the century many traditional religious beliefs were shaken by startling developments in scientific



thought. As early as 1830-1833 Sir Charles Lyell in his *Principles of Geology* had demonstrated from the 'record of the rocks' the immense age of the earth, in conflict with the Biblical account of its creation about 4,000 years B.C. In 1859 Charles Darwin published his book, *The Origin of Species*. After years of travel and research investigating various forms of life, Darwin announced his conclusion that different species had evolved because they had been better equipped than their rivals in the struggle for existence. The long neck of the giraffe, for example, had enabled it to reach food outside the grasp of its competitors. Thus the emergence of modern forms of life was due to the 'survival of the fittest.' Evolution as suggested by Darwin conflicted with the account of special creation as given in *Genesis*, and a sharp controversy resulted. Darwin himself stood aloof from the conflict and went on with his science. Some twenty years later his *Descent of Man* argued that man himself was the result of evolution, and that both man and apes sprang from a common stock. "Is man an ape or an angel?" asked Disraeli. "I am on the side of the angels." But this did not answer Darwin's evidence. From the outset many broadminded churchmen accepted the discoveries of science, and, though the latter have proceeded much further since Darwin's time, they have in no sense solved the ultimate mystery of life and the universe. Rather they have enhanced the miracle.

### QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Describe and illustrate the main features of the Romantic Revival.
2. Illustrate and account for (a) Victorian optimism, (b) the revolt against it.
3. Find out, in your neighbourhood if possible, buildings that illustrate (a) the classical revival, (b) the Gothic revival, (c) twentieth-century architecture.
4. Describe briefly the three main parties in the Anglican Church. Give an account of the Oxford Movement.
5. Write brief notes on: *Lyrical Ballads*, *Waverley Novels*, *The Origin of Species*, the *Revised Version of the Bible*.



# PART VI

## THE WORLD AT WAR (1914-1942)

### CHAPTER XXII

#### THE GREAT WAR AND THE PEACE TREATIES

##### **1914: Germany's Western Attack held**

FACED with a war on two fronts Germany aimed at defeating France before the cumbersome Russian 'steam-roller' could be set moving. In accordance with long-prepared plans Germany invaded Belgium with the intention of sweeping her armies round so as to encircle Paris. The heroic defence of Liège and Antwerp by the Belgians saved valuable days for the Allies. None the less the small British army under Sir John French was forced on August 24 to retreat from Mons, and General Joffre, faced with superior forces, ordered a general retreat of the Allies. By September 6, when the Germans were only twelve miles from Paris, Joffre ordered a counter-attack, and by heroic efforts the French forced the Germans back at the battle of the Marne, one of the decisive battles in history. The Germans then strove to wheel their right flank round and capture the Channel ports but they were held by the British at the first battle of Ypres, fifty miles east of Calais.

Elsewhere things went more completely in Germany's favour. On August 28 von Hindenburg and von Ludendorff defeated the Russians at Tannenberg and began an invasion of Poland. In October Turkey joined the Central Powers, and in November a German naval squadron under von Spee won a victory at Coronel, off Chile. The naval balance was soon restored, however, by the sinking of the German raider, *Emden*, by the Australian cruiser *Sydney* in the Indian Ocean, and by the defeat of von Spee's squadron at the Falkland Islands.



**1915: Western Trenches and Eastern Adventures**

During the winter of 1914-1915 both sides dug themselves in from the Swiss frontier to the Channel coast. Despite efforts to dislodge each other, as at Neuve Chapelle and the second battle of Ypres, neither side could gain the advantage. At home Kitchener, the Secretary for War, was busy raising a huge army of two millions for a struggle whose long duration he had been one of the very few to anticipate, while Lloyd George was placed in charge of the munitions production that the new type of warfare made supremely important. In May Italy joined the Allies, hoping thus to win coveted territories from Austria. The new type of trench-warfare, which began in earnest in 1915, is vividly described in H. M. Tomlinson's *All our Yesterdays*:

The rapid battles in the open, with victory or defeat dependent on chance were at an end, and generals could no longer manœuvre their men, because the troops were crouching in trenches, below the level of the ground. Their men dared not even stand upright. The lines of the ditches into which the armies had drained, and were stagnant, began at the Swiss mountains, and meandered as though they were raw interminable wounds in the green of the earth for hundreds of miles, over the hills and through the valleys of France, having no design in their positions anywhere except the ruthless truth that the war was stabilised because men were worn out, or had been killed on both sides in numbers so great yet equal that the survivors tried to find rest where they were and under cover, which only spades could give them.

For four years, till the very last weeks of the war, neither side could shift its line by more than thirty miles and then only after enormous casualties.

It is not surprising that an 'eastern' school of thought arose, urging that a decision should be sought in the east. In March the navy failed in an attempt to force the Dardanelles and thus bring help to sorely pressed Russia. In the following month the 'Anzacs' (Australia and New Zealand Army Corps) forced a landing on the Gallipoli peninsula at the entrance to the Dar-



danelles. For eight months the foothold was maintained, but no headway could be made and in December evacuation took place. The Turkish Empire was also attacked in Mesopotamia, where in December General Townshend's forces found themselves besieged at Kut-el-Amara. Meanwhile Allied forces



RETURNING FROM THE TRENCHES, YPRES SALIENT, 1918

Imperial War Museum, copyright reserved

landed at Salonika to render help to the Serbians, and Bulgaria declared in favour of the Central Powers.

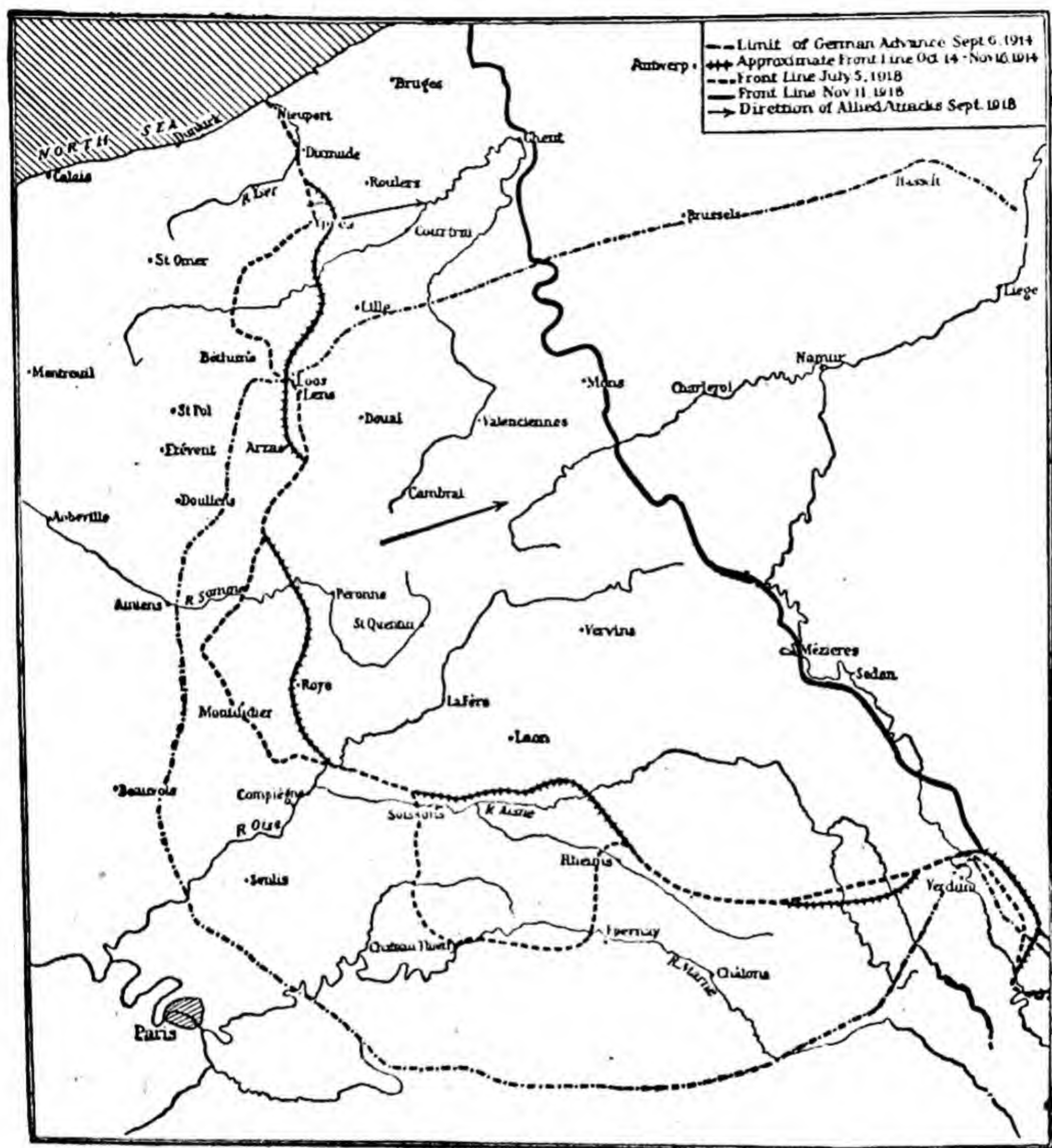
At sea Germany proclaimed a blockade of Britain and declared British waters a war-zone (February 18). This was followed in May by the sinking of the *Lusitania*, when over a thousand civilians, including one hundred Americans, were drowned.

### **1916: The Western Front again and Jutland**

Early in 1916 activity revived on the western front when Germany began her massive attacks on the French fortress of Verdun. For five months the French resisted, suffering enormous casualties, but vindicating their boast, " *Ils ne passeront pas.*" Russia and Italy launched diversionary attacks, but the biggest effort was made by Britain when Sir Douglas Haig, successor to French, began the long battle of the Somme in July. It was now the turn of the Allies to try to break the western stalemate, but after five months of bloody warfare they



had achieved little, and when the Germans retreated to their well-prepared Hindenburg line in the winter of 1916-1917 the impasse still remained. It was during the Somme battle, on September 15, that tanks—so-called to keep their purpose a



THE WESTERN FRONT

secret even from the workers who constructed them—were first used.

At sea the biggest battle of the war took place on May 31, when Beatty's scouting cruisers sighted Hipper's forces off Jutland. Soon the main battle-fleets of Jellicoe and von Scheer were engaged, but the battle was never really fought out because,



under cover of night, the German battle-fleet escaped to its bases. The British losses were numerically heavier, but the German fleet had had enough and never again put out for action.

In the other theatres of war Townshend was forced to surrender at Kut in April, and Lawrence of Arabia began his work of inciting the Arabs against their Turkish masters. Roumania joined the Allies in August but was overwhelmed before the end of the year. In Britain conscription was introduced and the nation was stunned by the death of Kitchener, drowned on his way to Russia. In December Asquith, whose Liberal government had early been transformed into a national coalition, was replaced by the more energetic Lloyd George, who possessed Chatham's knack of inspiring the nation to greater efforts.

### **1917: Russia's Revolutions and the U.S.A.'s Entry into the War**

At the beginning of 1917 Germany declared an unrestricted blockade of Britain, threatening to sink at sight every ship, belligerent or neutral, in British waters or their approaches. British shipping-losses mounted terrifically; at one time about a quarter of all the ships leaving British ports failed to return. The food-situation became serious and rationing was introduced. At sea counter-devices were adopted, the most successful being the convoy system, due almost entirely to the Prime Minister himself. Indiscriminate sinkings were the chief cause of America's changing attitude. True to tradition, the United States under President Wilson had avoided foreign entanglements and tried to remain aloof from European quarrels. Her insistence on the freedom of the seas led her at first to dispute Britain's blockade of Germany and the right of search; but German sinkings, spyings, sabotage, and propaganda far outweighed British search-parties, and on April 5 the U.S.A. declared war on Germany. Her fleet was an immediate gain to the Allied cause, but it took time before her immense industrial and human resources could make their influence felt.



As the U.S.A. came in Russia went out. The Tsarist régime had proved incapable of organizing the nation for war, and the Russian 'steam-roller' had long been in reverse gear. Defeat, starvation, and lack of all kinds of equipment produced in March, 1917, the overthrow of the Tsardom and the establishment of a moderate government which tried to carry on the war. Germany allowed Lenin to pass from Switzerland to Russia to incite further revolution, and in October–November Lenin and Trotsky established a communist state based upon workers' soviets or councils. Realizing the need for peace to consolidate their power, the new Russian leaders agreed to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (March, 1918) whereby the independence of Finland and the Baltic states was recognized and the Ukraine became a granary under German control.

On the western front costly and fruitless attempts to break through on the Aisne produced a mutiny among the French troops. From July to November the British diverted Germany's attention by the third battle of Ypres, fought round Passchendaele amid indescribable conditions of mud. This was followed by the battle of Cambrai when tanks were first used on a large scale. From all the horrors of mud and blood no real gains emerged, and when Italy was defeated at Caporetto in October the outlook seemed very black. But the eastern sky was already brightening. Early in 1917 General Maude captured Bagdad, and in December Allenby, operating from Egypt, entered Jerusalem—which had not been in Christian hands since the early Crusades.

### **1918: The End**

With large German armies set free by the defeat of Russia and Roumania, and with the disquieting prospect of growing American aid to the Allies, Germany had every inducement to launch a large-scale attack in the west. On March 21 the spring offensive of Hindenburg and Ludendorff began, and soon the Allies were in retreat. General Gough's Fifth British Army was destroyed, and the usually silent Haig issued his famous "backs to the wall" order. The French general Foch



was appointed generalissimo over the whole western front, an action that should have been taken much earlier in the war. The only bright spot was the success of the navy on St George's Day, April 23, in blocking the enemy's submarine base at Zeebrugge. By May the Germans were at the Marne again, though never so close to Paris as in 1914. Then on July 18, three days after Ludendorff's final effort to break through, Foch ordered the Allied counter-offensive. Superior for the first time in military equipment, and heartened and helped by American troops, the Allies soon had the enemy in retreat. August 8, when British forces drove the Germans across the old Somme battlefield, was in Ludendorff's words "the black day of the German army." In September the Hindenburg Line was pierced. Germany's allies were fast falling out: Bulgaria in September, Turkey in October after a brilliant campaign by Allenby, and Austria at the beginning of November. German morale crumbled as the certainty of defeat dawned upon a starving nation. In the early days of November the German fleet at Kiel mutinied, the Kaiser abdicated and fled to Holland, and the last Imperial Chancellor yielded his powers to the socialist Ebert. Germany asked for an armistice which was signed in Foch's train in a wooded siding at Rethondes, and at 11 A.M. on November 11 the fighting ceased. Germany laid down her arms, and her fleet sailed to Scapa Flow where it scuttled itself rather than face the shame of surrender. It is impossible to estimate the human and material cost to the world of these four years of war. The British Empire alone lost nearly one million killed, and her losses were considerably less than those of Germany, Russia, France, or Austria. Millions more were wounded, and of those left behind many were bereaved, half-starved, diseased, and perhaps refugees from what had once been smiling homes.

### **The Peace Settlement**

The main Allied powers (Britain, France, the U.S.A., Japan, and Italy) met at Paris in the following year, and on June 28, 1919, concluded the Treaty of Versailles with Germany. It was



the work mainly of three men—President Wilson, an idealist with a strong belief in democracy and self-determination and an ardent desire for world-peace: ‘Tiger’ Clemenceau, who embodied the French desire for revenge and the punishment of the defeated foe: and Lloyd George, quick-witted and realistic, who tried to steer a middle course. The terms of the Treaty of Versailles and its related treaties group themselves under three main heads: penal provisions, territorial changes, and the establishment of the League of Nations.

Under the first heading “the aggression of Germany and her allies” was declared responsible for the war, and Germany was obliged to shoulder a huge bill of reparations, the exact amount of which was left to a commission to determine. The German army was reduced to 100,000, and Germany was stripped of weapons of offence like tanks, submarines, and aircraft. She was to demilitarize permanently the left bank of the Rhine and part of the right bank, and Allied troops were to occupy the Rhineland for fifteen years. Attempts were made to bring German war-criminals to trial but were soon abandoned. Germany and Austria were forbidden to unite.

The territorial changes were on such a scale as had never before been attempted, including as they did the funeral arrangements of four large empires—Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia, and Turkey. Germany restored Alsace-Lorraine to France, who also obtained a fifteen-year lease of the Saar coal-field. Small districts were transferred to Belgium and Denmark. On Germany’s eastern border much larger changes were made. Here the old state of Poland was revived, composed of territories from Germany, Russia, and Austria, stolen by those states in past centuries. Poland’s outlet to the sea, a corridor along the Vistula, cut off Germany from her province of East Prussia—an awkward solution of a still more awkward problem. Germany also lost Memel to Lithuania. Germany was deprived of all her overseas possessions, her African empire going mainly to the British Empire and France, her Far Eastern islands to the British Empire and Japan. The government of these colonies embodied the new mandates



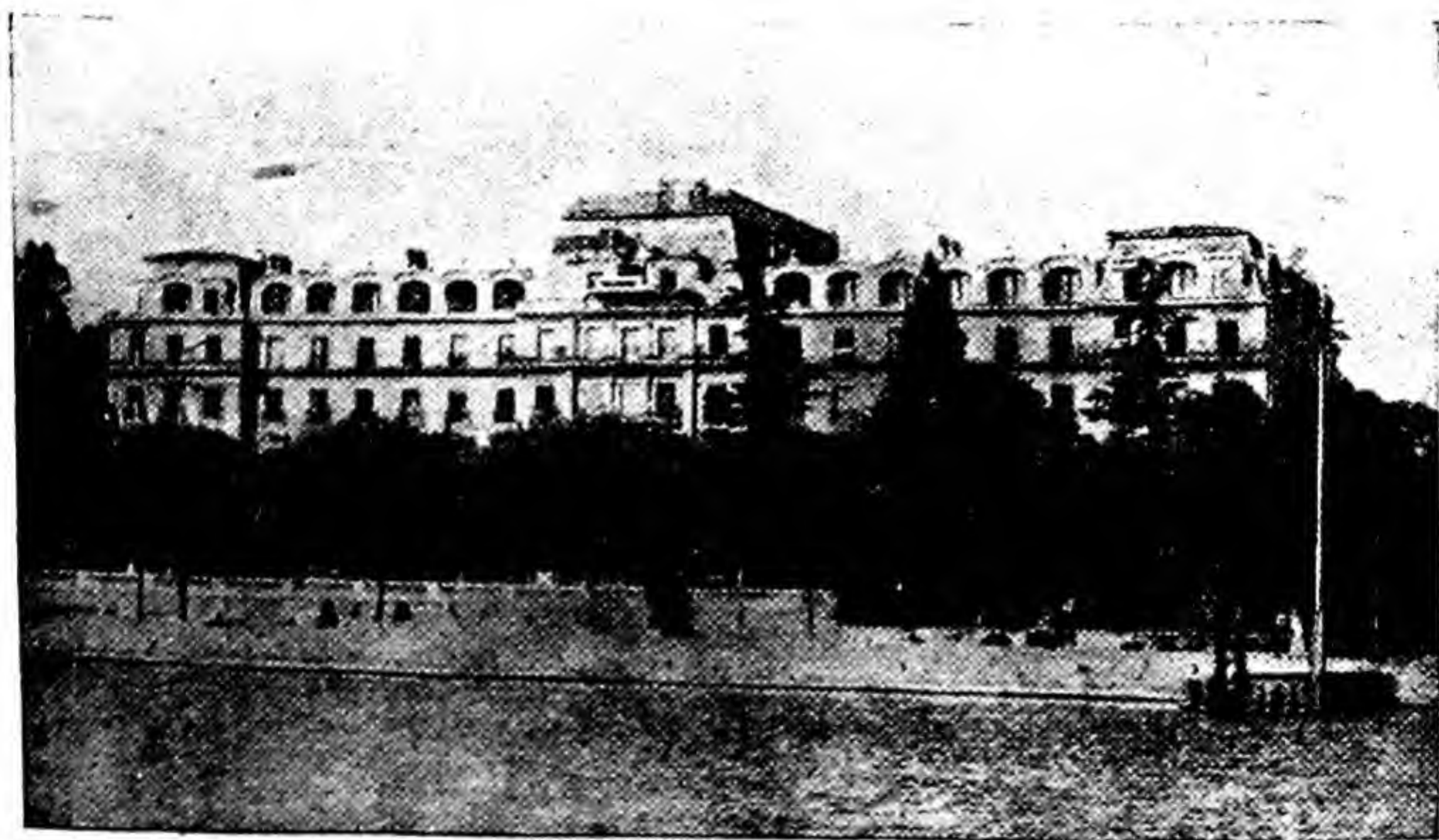
system, whereby the ruling power governed according to mandate and answered to the League of Nations for its actions. The 'ramshackle empire' of Austria-Hungary had largely dissolved of its own accord in the last months of the war. It was now definitely broken up into its own component parts. A new state, Czecho-Slovakia, was formed with old Bohemia as its core; Serbia, considerably enlarged by the addition of the Serbo-Croats from Austria-Hungary, took the new name of Yugoslavia. Roumania was likewise enlarged by obtaining its compatriots of Transylvania. Italy obtained parts of the Tyrol, including a quarter of a million German-speaking Austrians. Two small states were thus left behind, Austria and Hungary, 'orphans of the storm' which had swept away their family heritage. In the Balkans Bulgaria lost to Greece her valued outlet to the Ægean. As far as Russia was concerned the independence—proclaimed by the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk—of Finland, Esthonia, Latvia, and Lithuania was confirmed. The Turkish Empire was also broken up; Arabia was granted independence, Syria placed under French mandate, Transjordan, Iraq, and Palestine under British mandate, the last-named being intended as a national home for the Jews.

Among the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles was the Covenant establishing the League of Nations, the creation largely but by no means exclusively of President Wilson. The League, with headquarters at Geneva, was open to every sovereign state, and its objects were to promote international justice and well-being and to prevent the recurrence of wars. Government was in the hands of a small council of the Great Powers and elected lesser powers, and of an annual assembly representing every member, large or small. The territorial integrity of all member-states was guaranteed, and issues likely to produce war were to be referred to the council or to a Permanent Court of International Justice at The Hague. War indeed was not completely outlawed, but provision was made for economic and military sanctions against members that broke their obligations under the Covenant. The League was given the task of governing the Saar and Danzig, of supervising



mandates and of safeguarding racial minorities. Through the International Labour Office at Geneva efforts were to be made to raise labour-conditions and tackle other economic problems of world importance.

The peace settlement provoked the criticism and opposition of Germany, who maintained that it was not binding because it had been dictated and not negotiated. Germany objected to the war-guilt clause, pointing out that other nations shared the guilt for the war, and she also argued that the terms were not in accord with Wilson's Fourteen Points on the basis of which



THE PALACE OF THE NATIONS, GENEVA

*Photo E.N.A.*

the armistice had been signed. As for the League, it soon became, in many German minds, an instrument of the victors for perpetuating an unjust settlement.

This settlement has met with much criticism from other quarters, which have maintained that the principle of national self-determination (neglected at Vienna in 1815) was now carried too far. New and often strongly nationalistic states were created, in some cases too small to stand alone in modern conditions. Economic considerations were ignored, as, for instance, by the painful attempts to extort reparations from Germany or by splitting up economic units like the Silesian



coal-field or the Danube basin. The exclusion of Russia from the peace conference was regrettable. So too was the exclusion of Germany from the League, an indication of the general lack of any real attempt at co-operation between the ex-enemy powers which might have weaned Germany from her military traditions.

None the less, the settlement was an honest attempt to solve conflicting interests by applying the doctrine of self-determination. It is estimated that only three per cent. of Europe's population was left under foreign rule, and in some cases this was unavoidable. The League was the most ambitious scheme for world-peace ever devised. That it failed to achieve its main object was not altogether the fault of its framers, but of those who came after.

### **The U.S.A. and the Washington Conference**

The first and in some ways the severest blow to the new world order came from the United States of America, where strong opposition existed to the foreign entanglements implied in the Versailles system and still more in the Covenant. Wilson returned to the U.S.A. to win over his countrymen, but he lacked tact and the ability to deal with men, and on November 19 the Senate refused to cast the two-thirds vote necessary for the ratification of all treaties. The U.S.A. was thus out of the League, and Wilson, a broken man, died in 1924. But America was still vitally interested in the Far East and in 1921-1922 the Washington Conference of the Great Powers met to solve the problems of the Pacific. The main powers, including Japan, agreed to respect one another's rights in the Pacific and to guarantee the integrity of China; the capital ship strength of the British Empire, the U.S.A., and Japan was fixed on a 5 : 5 : 3 ratio.

### **Dying Embers of War**

The armistice of 1918 did not immediately end the fighting everywhere. Till 1920 numerous Allied armies helped Russian counter-revolutionaries in attempts to overthrow the Bolshevik



government, and Trotsky spent over two years in a train travelling from point to point over sixteen fronts to organize resistance. As a result of these wars Poland pushed her frontier a hundred miles inside what was really Russian territory; otherwise Russia remained intact with her leaders suspicious of capitalist designs. Inside Turkey Mustapha Kemal Pasha led a revolt against the worst features of the peace treaty imposed on his country. In 1922 Kemal drove the Greeks from Smyrna and some small Allied forces from Gallipoli, and in 1923 the Treaty of Lausanne modified the previous treaty in Turkey's favour. By the early twenties the embers of war had been stamped out and men were free to rebuild the world upon the ashes.

### QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Outline the main course of events on the western front from 1914 to 1918.
2. What military arguments could be brought forward in favour of eastern as opposed to western attacks during the Great War?
3. Outline the main features of the peace settlement of 1919. Which of these features do you regard as (a) suitable, (b) unsuitable as contributions towards world-peace?
4. Summarize the aims, machinery, and methods of the League of Nations.



## CHAPTER XXIII

### FROM THE FIRST TO THE SECOND WORLD WAR

#### **British Governments since the Great War**

WHEN Britain declared war in 1914 a Liberal government had held office for over eight years. In 1915 Asquith transformed his government into a coalition, which in 1916 was succeeded by Lloyd George's coalition. Since the Great War there has not been a single Liberal ministry. The Liberal party suffered at the outset by rivalries between the Asquith and the Lloyd George groups. Many people, moreover, regarded the Liberals, with their emphasis on *political* liberty, as played out and transferred their allegiance either to the Conservatives or to the Labour party according to whether they opposed or desired far-reaching social and economic reforms. Consequently the Liberals, although continuing to poll many votes, often found themselves defeated in three-cornered contests. They advocated proportional representation as a solution, but so far nothing has been done to introduce this system. Political and economic crises have also given rise to National governments deriving support from all three parties. Since 1916 the following governments have held office:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Type of Government</i>	<i>Prime Minister</i>
1916-1922	Coalition	Lloyd George
1922-1924	Conservative	Bonar Law (1922-1923) Stanley Baldwin (1923-1924)
1924 (January to October)	Labour	Ramsay MacDonald
1924-1929	Conservative	Stanley Baldwin
1929-1931	Labour	Ramsay MacDonald
1931-	National	Ramsay MacDonald (1931-1935)



<i>Date</i>	<i>Type of Government</i>	<i>Prime Minister</i>
1931-	National	Stanley Baldwin (1935-1937) Neville Chamberlain (1937-1940) Winston Churchill (1940- )

Broadly speaking, the history of Britain (and indeed of most other countries) between the two world wars resolves itself into two periods. They are, first the period of the twenties when slow and often painful efforts were being made to rebuild the world, and second that of the thirties when crisis succeeded crisis and the world was heading towards the catastrophe of the Second World War. These two periods are separated by the world economic crisis of 1931.

### (1) THE WORLD IN THE TWENTIES

#### **Domestic Affairs in Britain (1918-1931)**

In 1918 Lloyd George's government, having passed the Representation of the People Act granting the vote to women over thirty, appealed to the country and was returned with a large majority. For eighteen months things went well. The sudden demand for all kinds of articles which had been difficult to obtain during the war produced a trade boom. Unemployment was small and the Prime Minister's pledge of a "land fit for heroes" seemed in process of fulfilment. Then in the latter part of 1920 the boom broke, and the inevitable result of four years' waste and destruction was seen. Countries could not buy one another's goods and the domestic consumer had not the money to purchase what he wanted. Increased government expenditure resulted in high taxes. The National Debt, which in 1914 had been £650,000,000 bearing an interest of £24,000,000, had risen by 1920 to £7,800,000,000. Interest alone on this huge sum was £350,000,000, apart from any repayment of the principal! As the depression deepened and



the demand for goods ceased, prices fell, business stagnated, and the grim spectre of unemployment appeared. In 1920 a new Unemployment Insurance Act was passed to cover many more workers. For the next twenty years the unemployed could at times be reckoned in millions. The so-called 'dole,' distributed under the insurance scheme, prevented starvation (and incidentally revolution), but was no solution of a problem which baffled one government after another and was never really solved till the huge labour-demands of the Second World War arose. Industrial unrest occurred as wages fell, either by employers' decrees, or by the undercutting of men eager for work at any price. Miners, railwaymen, and transport workers formed a Triple Alliance to back up one another's demands if necessary.

An important achievement of the Lloyd George coalition was the settlement (up to a point) of the Irish question. Irish Home Rule had been all but granted in 1914 when the Great War intervened. In 1916 the Irish extremists, organized in the Irish Republican Army, staged their Easter revolt at Dublin, when 450 people lost their lives. The British government executed fifteen ringleaders, pardoning one, Eamon de Valera, because of his American birth. The Irish republicans then formed the Sinn Fein (Ourselves Alone) party, and the years 1918-1921 witnessed civil war in Ireland, the British government replying to Irish murders by reinforcing the Royal Irish Constabulary with irregulars known as Black and Tans. At last, in December, 1921, Lloyd George and some of the less extreme Irish leaders negotiated the treaty which, when ratified in 1922, established the present position in Ireland. The Irish Free State was created with the rights of a self-governing dominion; but the six northern counties of Ulster were allowed to remain outside with a separate government for local affairs, and with representation also in the Parliament at Westminster. Civil war now continued between those Irish who accepted the treaty, and those, led by de Valera, who opposed it. Eventually peace was restored, but not contentment. The Irish Free State, now Eire, dissatisfied with the exclusion of Northern



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trade still further aggravated unemployment. The miners were among the worst off, their industry being adversely affected by the growing use of water-produced electricity on the Continent. When the owners tried to lower the men's standards, the fiery miners' leader, A. J. Cook, retorted with the slogan: "Not a cent off the pay, not a minute on the day," and suggested nationalization of the coal industry. The government's efforts to avert a stoppage failed. The miners struck work, and on May 4, 1926, railwaymen, transport workers, and printers followed suit out of sympathy. The General Strike, an attempt to paralyse the nation's life, was an open challenge to the government, and the latter replied by organizing all kinds of volunteer services and by taking over the wireless. After nine days the strike collapsed, and although the miners continued on their own till November they too eventually came to terms. The Trade Union Act of 1927 (see *p.* 285) aimed at preventing any repetition of a similar episode.

Other important acts of these years, described elsewhere, were the Reform Act of 1928 (giving women the vote at twenty-one) and the Derating and Local Government Acts of 1928-1929. Baldwin then appealed to the country but was defeated on the unemployment issue. Labour obtained the largest number of seats but had no clear majority, and MacDonald's second Labour government (1929-1931) was, like the first, dependent upon Liberal votes.

The new government gave J. H. Thomas, the railway leader, the special task of tackling unemployment. Having no solution, he took refuge in spectacular journeys and meaningless speeches. The world economic crisis was in fact approaching and unemployment was increasing in all countries. In 1931 the country was faced with bankruptcy; the Bank of England had to borrow gold from the U.S.A., and the government was compelled to cut down expenditure, including unemployment benefits. This last pill was too bitter for MacDonald's supporters, and in August, 1931, the Prime Minister resigned. He immediately formed a National government composed of Conservatives, Liberals, and a handful of his former colleagues.



## World Trends in the Twenties

Germany in 1919 adopted a Republican constitution drawn up at Weimar. The Weimar Republic was scorned by the old military and bureaucratic cliques who regarded it as but another symptom of Germany's humiliation. Abroad Germany was excluded from the League (till 1926) and was pressed by the Allies for reparation payments whose total was fixed in 1921 at £6,600,000,000. The German currency had been inflated during the war; in the post-war years it lost practically all its value, and people with savings were ruined.

In other countries new experiments in government were being made. Italy, suffering from industrial unrest and discontent with the peace terms, was an easy prey for Mussolini and his Fascists (1922). Turkey was modernized by Mustapha Kemal Pasha, who introduced changes ranging from the Latin alphabet and ballroom dancing to abolishing the old fez and women's veils. Even China was waking from its sleep of centuries and under the Kuomintang or Nationalist Party was painfully building up a united nation. By far the most important experiments were being made in Russia, where Lenin and Trotsky were creating a communist state with the means of production under common control. Russian communism was shunned by the capitalist world, which suspected it (with some justice) of stirring up trouble in other countries. After Lenin's death in 1924 Trotsky was gradually ousted by Stalin, who in 1929 launched the first of his five-year plans to transform Russia into a modern industrial state.

The United States during these years was enjoying a remarkable period of prosperity. It was the great creditor-nation of the post-war world, for, if Germany owed the Allies reparations, the Allies in their turn owed America huge debts. Unfortunately the U.S.A., in common with most nations, erected high tariff barriers to exclude foreign goods, and so large consignments of gold left Europe to find their way into the vaults of American banks.



## **British Foreign Policy and International Relations in the Twenties**

When the U.S.A. retired into her shell in 1919 Wilson's guarantee of the French eastern frontier was repudiated, whereupon Britain repudiated her similar guarantee, and France, with little faith in an untried League of Nations, sought security along other lines. She aimed at preventing a revival of Germany, at extorting as much reparations as possible, and at building up a system of alliance with the new countries on Germany's frontiers. The absence of any sense of security torpedoed all attempts to carry out the Allied promises of disarmament, for without security both Britain and France were unwilling to disarm.

In 1923 France accused Germany of defaulting on her reparations payments, and French and Belgian troops occupied the Ruhr. Britain refused to follow suit and protested that France's action was contrary to the peace treaties, which only provided for a military occupation of the Rhineland. Germany refused to co-operate with the French, allowing workmen to strike and factories to lie idle, while her currency became so inflated that the mark grew valueless and Germans found their savings of a lifetime of no worth. The impasse was ended by the Dawes Plan of 1924 under which Germany's annual reparations payments were diminished, and American and Allied loans were made to Germany to restore her currency and rebuild her life.

A happier era now dawned, for in 1925 the Locarno Treaty was negotiated between Stresemann of Germany, Briand of France, and Austen Chamberlain of Britain. 'Locarno' guaranteed the frontiers between France, Germany, and Belgium, and in a less definite way tried to stabilize Germany's eastern frontier. In the following year (1926) Germany took her seat on the League of Nations. The middle years of the twenties were in fact the brightest period between the two world wars. The League was able to solve peacefully several small disputes, and with the help at times of powerful non-members such as the U.S.A. and Soviet Russia proved its immense value in waging



war on disease and the traffic in drugs. In 1928 the Briand-Kellogg Peace Pact renouncing war as "an instrument of national policy" was signed by practically every nation in the world. In 1929 the Young Plan attempted a fresh settlement of reparations, and in 1930 the last Allied troops were withdrawn from the Rhineland—five years before the prescribed treaty-date.

But by the following year the world was in the throes of the biggest economic crisis in history, and the work of the previous ten years collapsed like a house of cards.

## (2) THE ECONOMIC CRISIS (1930-1933)

### **Causes and Nature of the Crisis**

Whether the economic 'blizzard' was the product merely of post-war difficulties or of grave deficiencies in the world's capitalist structure is open to dispute. Increasing mechanization was producing far more articles than could be profitably sold, not because people had a surplus of these articles, but because they had not the necessary money to purchase them. Hence the familiar spectacle of poverty amid plenty—of natural resources, capital, productive equipment, and labour lying idle while millions of people (including, of course, the workless labourers, themselves) lived in poverty. High tariff barriers contributed to the same end, causing a disastrous shrinkage in world-trade. Prices, especially of foodstuffs and raw materials, slumped so heavily that it became unprofitable to produce or sell them, and the world was shocked to learn that fish was being thrown back into the sea, food crops were being ploughed in, and crates of oranges were being thrown overboard—all while people went hungry!

The situation was aggravated by questions of trade and currency arising out of war debts and reparations. Germany owed the Allies huge reparations, the Allies owed the U.S.A. huge debts. How could payment be made, in gold or goods? Large shipments of gold were in fact made, mainly to America, but the world's total gold stores were much smaller than the sums



that had to be paid. Payment in goods was likewise difficult because the U.S.A. and other countries kept out foreign goods by high tariffs for fear their own industries should suffer. If Germany, for example, paid Britain in coal, this threw more British coal-miners out of work. Then a comic way out was discovered. Under the Dawes Plan of 1924 the U.S.A., Britain, and others agreed to lend Germany money which she could pay back as reparations, the Allies then sending part of it back to the U.S.A., as war-debt repayments! By 1929 American investors began to doubt the wisdom of continuing their loans. They ceased to lend and even sought repayment of what they had already lent. Germany without loans found herself unable (or some said unwilling) to continue reparations; the Allies without reparations were in a similar position over war-debts. Everyone hastened to call in his loans but no one repaid. The comedy had become a tragedy.

### **The Course of the Crisis**

In 1931 an important Austrian bank went bankrupt and was soon followed by others in Germany. Britain, through the Bank of England, borrowed gold from America, but this soon went in repayments, and existing stocks began to dwindle. In August Ramsay MacDonald ended his Labour government and formed a National government. In September, to save the country's last remaining gold, Britain went off the gold standard—an example soon followed by others. In 1931 President Hoover of the U.S.A. arranged a year's moratorium, *i.e.*, non-payment of debts. Before the moratorium period expired Germany renounced all further reparations (1932). In the same year Britain reversed her ancient Free Trade policy by levying a ten per cent. duty on foreign imports, and by building up at the Ottawa Conference a system of imperial preference. Also in 1932 Britain made her last annual debt repayment to the U.S.A. A World Economic Conference in 1933 broke down in an attempt to stabilize world currencies in terms of one another.



## **The Results of the Crisis**

Reparations and war debts were now gone, not as a result of friendly agreement, but in circumstances which led everyone to accuse his neighbour of defaulting. Tariff barriers rose higher, and instead of economic co-operation, which alone could have saved the world, the policy was "Every nation for itself and the devil take the hindmost."

Politically too a new situation emerged. While the world was preoccupied, Japan flouted her Washington and League of Nations commitments by invading Manchuria (1931). Unemployment reached unprecedented figures: three millions in Britain, six millions in Germany, fifteen millions in the U.S.A. New governments took charge of affairs: in 1931 the National government in Britain, pinning its faith in Protection; in 1933 (elected November, 1932) President Roosevelt in the U.S.A. with vast schemes of public works which he labelled the 'New Deal'; in 1933 the Nazis in Germany, where on January 30 Adolf Hitler became Chancellor.

### (3) THE DRIFT TO WAR (1933-1939)

#### **British Domestic Affairs under the National Government**

By 1933 the worst of the economic crisis was over. Unemployment by no means disappeared but at any rate it improved, whether as a result of Protection or of other factors such as the abandonment of the gold standard, the sweeping away of reparations and war debts, and a certain improvement in world-trade, one cannot say. In May, 1935, the Royal Jubilee celebrated George V's completion of twenty-five years as King. Soon afterwards Baldwin succeeded MacDonald as Prime Minister, and an election in October, 1935, confirmed the National Government in power. In January, 1936, George V, the 'well-beloved,' died. The Prince of Wales was proclaimed as Edward VIII, but abdicated in the following December rather than give up his intention of marrying an American



woman previously twice married. He was created Duke of Windsor and was succeeded by his brother, the Duke of York, as George VI, the new king and his queen, Elizabeth, being crowned in May, 1937. Shortly afterwards Baldwin retired



UNEMPLOYED ON THEIR WAY TO A DEMONSTRATION IN GLASGOW,  
MARCH, 1935

*Fox Photos*

to the House of Lords and Neville Chamberlain became Prime Minister.

Important acts were passed during these years relating to transport, factories, education, and the suppression of private armies like Oswald Mosley's British Fascists. Domestic affairs, however, were quite subordinate to the grave events taking place abroad.

### **Nazi Germany**

Hitler, who became German Chancellor in January, 1933, was an Austrian by birth. He had served in the Great War, was disgusted with Germany's surrender (due in his view to the treachery of Jews and Communists), and was determined



to upset the peace settlement and build a new Germany. After an abortive attempt to seize power at the Munich beer-house in 1923 he forsook open violence for more or less constitutional methods and concentrated on the organization of his National Socialist or Nazi party. The economic crisis broke up the more moderate political parties, and the German electorate voted increasingly for the extremes of either Communism or National Socialism. At first Hitler headed a coalition government, but during the next few years he beat down all rival parties or disaffected Nazis by methods which in any civilized country should have been punished by death. After President Hindenburg's death in the summer of 1934 Hitler became Führer, *i.e.*, Leader or Dictator, of Germany.

National Socialism proclaims the superiority of the German race and its right to rule all lesser breeds for its own benefit. It has shown a complete disregard for the pledged word where the interests of Germany or the State are concerned, and it has dragooned the nation, especially the younger generation, for purposes of war. All who offend or oppose it, be they Jews, Democrats, Socialists, or Communists, have been silenced by brutality or even death. At first Hitler's strong rule, his insistence upon Germany's rights as a great power and his tackling of the unemployment problem (largely by creating work in the armaments industries), commended him to a Germany that was tired of the weak governments of the Weimar Republic. By the time the real meaning of his rule became clear he was firmly seated, like the old man of the sea, on the back of the German nation, which was so spellbound that apparently it had not the wish and certainly not the power to shake him off.

### **International Crises (1933-1939)**

• The story of these years is a melancholy tale of increasing aggression and of the failure of the peaceful-minded nations to get together and organize collective resistance. Hitler began with actions which seemed to many fair-minded observers justifiable assertions of Germany's rights as a great power, and which in fact they would have been had they stopped there.



Conflicting views and interests among the democracies obscured the real issues at stake and prevented united action. Britain was still inclined to treat Germany with more consideration than France, and the two ex-Allies misunderstood each other. The wealthy classes everywhere looked on Soviet Russia as their real enemy and hoped a powerful Germany would prove a bulwark against the spread of Communism. Hence Russia was cold-shouldered when she might have been made a powerful brake on Germany. Reluctance to plunge the world into war gave rise under Neville Chamberlain to 'appeasement,' a policy of condoning aggression (provided it did not too directly affect British interests) in the hope that each fresh morsel would satisfy the monster's hunger. Instead, it merely whetted it. A similar desire for peace and a false sense of security led the American Congress to pass Neutrality Laws to place in quarantine areas stricken with the disease of war; Roosevelt signed these laws against his better judgment. And so with each fresh step Hitler found the opposition divided, and he was helped on his way now by the advocates of fair play for Germany, now by the lovers of peace at any price, and above all by those who hoped that in the last resort they could always direct his footsteps to someone else's door. Undeterred by any apparent inconsistency Hitler encouraged them all in their delusions. In Britain Winston Churchill, who was without office in the National government, raised his voice ceaselessly to warn Parliament and the nation of the approaching peril, but he was not heeded.

In October, 1933, when it became certain that the Disarmament Conference would fail, Germany left the League. In July, 1934, Nazi agents murdered the Austrian Chancellor, Dolfuss, as a prelude to seizing his country; but Mussolini, not yet the ally of Hitler, took preventive action, and Hitler disavowed his agents. In January, 1935, the Saar coal-field was returned to Germany after a plebiscite held in accordance with the Treaty of Versailles. Two months later Hitler repudiated the disarmament clauses of Versailles by introducing conscription. The next move came from Italy, which in October, 1935, began



the conquest of Abyssinia; ineffective measures by the League powers only resulted in offending Italy without deterring her. The Abyssinian war continued into the following year, and Hitler, seizing the opportunity that this distraction offered, sent German troops into the Rhineland (March, 1936). This was a breach, not only of Versailles, but of Locarno, which Germany had freely negotiated and which Hitler had publicly confirmed. In July civil war broke out in Spain between the government and the Spanish Fascists. Germany and Italy formed the Rome-Berlin Axis to aid the Fascists, while Russia sent help to the government. The Fascist powers supplied sufficient aid to turn the scales, and denied they were doing so, but deceived no one except apparently the British government, which preferred to close its eyes to what was happening. 1937 was a year of comparative quiet. In March, 1938, German troops invaded Austria. Czecho-Slovakia was then accused of oppressing its three million German inhabitants and was obviously the next victim. The crisis was reached in September, 1938, when Neville Chamberlain made his historic flights to Germany to avert war. At Munich Hitler obtained practically all his demands and informed an increasingly sceptical world that "This is the last territorial claim I have to make in Europe." In March, 1939, he annexed the rest of Czecho-Slovakia, which thus became his first non-German colony in Europe. The democratic powers were by now thoroughly alarmed, and as Poland seemed fated to be the next victim, judging by Hitler's demands for Danzig and the obliteration of the Polish corridor, Britain and France guaranteed Polish independence. On Good Friday Italy invaded Albania, but it was upon Hitler's attitude towards Poland that the question of world-peace or war now turned. Attempts by Britain and France during the summer of 1939 to enlist Russian support failed, and on August 21 a pact between Russia and Germany was announced. On the morning of September 1 German troops without warning invaded Poland. On September 3 Britain and France declared war on Germany.

The period of peace, beginning with the armistice of Novem-



ber 11, 1918, had thus failed by two months and eight days to reach the majority age of twenty-one years.

#### (4) THE SECOND WORLD WAR (1939- )

##### **First Phase : The British Empire and France in Alliance**

In the autumn of 1939 Poland was overrun, first by German troops and soon by Russian as well. The winter months of 1939-1940 were spent on the western front by two armies firmly entrenched in their Maginot and Siegfried Lines, and it seemed as if the monotonous trench-warfare of 1914-1918 would be repeated. The events of the following spring proved otherwise; the tank and the aeroplane had introduced a new mobility into warfare which enabled an army with superior equipment to sweep aside all obstacles. On April 9, 1940, Germany invaded Denmark and Norway; Allied troops sent to help the latter soon had to be evacuated. On May 10 Germany invaded Holland, Belgium, and Luxembourg to secure her flank, extend her coastline, and by-pass the Maginot Line. On the same day Neville Chamberlain resigned and Winston Churchill, who seemed likely to wage the war more vigorously, became Prime Minister. Soon Germany had conquered the Low Countries and, pivoting her line upon Sedan, swept her right wing round to invade France. The events of the next few weeks astonished the world. Facing an enemy superior in modern weapons, demoralized by the previous winter's inactivity, confused and betrayed by 'fifth column' activities, the French army went to pieces. On May 29 Britain began the difficult task of evacuating an army from the beaches of Dunkirk, and in the next few days the navy and a host of hurriedly collected small ships rescued over 200,000 British and 100,000 French troops. On June 10 Mussolini declared war on Britain and France to join, as he thought, in the final kill before the opportunity passed. On June 21 Hitler met the French delegates in the same coach placed in the same siding as had witnessed the armistice of 1918. But now the situation was reversed. Four days later, France ceased fire. Germany was



now the real ruler of France, though it suited her to leave part of it unoccupied under the nominal control of Marshal Pétain's Vichy government.

### **Second Phase: The British Empire alone**

The British Empire was now virtually alone against the combined power of Germany and Italy; only twenty miles of water saved her from the French fate. While Italy attacked Britain's strategic bases in Africa, Germany, with practically the whole European coastline under her control, concentrated on the Battle of the Atlantic and preparations for an invasion. Britain had to take action to prevent the French fleet from passing intact into Germany's hands, and her work-people turned to the task of repairing the Dunkirk losses. Local Defence Volunteers (later Home Guards) had been enrolled since the middle of May to resist invasion. In August and September, 1940, the German Luftwaffe attempted to win daylight control of the air over Britain. The numerically smaller Royal Air Force defeated the attempt and smashed the invasion barges that Hitler had collected across the Channel. The Luftwaffe then resorted to night-bombing. Through the long winter nights of 1940-1941 the sirens moaned with sickening regularity in London and elsewhere, and death and destruction rained from the skies. The civil population was now in the front line, but its spirit remained unbroken and it became clear that indiscriminate bombing had failed as a war-winning weapon.

Increasing aid had been flowing in from the U.S.A. where in November, 1940, Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected President for a third term, thus breaking one of the most cherished of American traditions. In September he had turned over fifty destroyers to aid Britain in the Battle of the Atlantic. In the following March (1941) the Lend-Lease Act assured Britain of war-supplies from the "arsenal of democracy" without the worry of payment.

In the spring of 1941 Germany conquered the Balkans as the year before she had conquered north-western Europe. In April she declared war on Yugoslavia and Greece, the latter having



throughout the previous winter more than repulsed the attacks of Italy. The story of Norway was repeated. The German war-machine swallowed its new victims with little difficulty, forcing a British expeditionary force to take refuge in Crete, whence German air-borne troops soon expelled the British afresh. In the evacuation from Crete Britain's naval losses were heavy, but her control of the seas remained secure. In March she had destroyed, without loss to herself, valuable units of the Italian fleet in the night-battle of Matapan. In May the German battleship *Bismarck*, after sinking H.M.S. *Hood*, was sunk in the Atlantic.

### **Third Phase: The World at War**

On June 22, 1941, Germany without notice attacked Russia. The British Prime Minister in a moving broadcast that same evening promised Russia every assistance. The Russians, though driven back, fought valiantly and kept their armies intact. Their stubborn resistance astonished the world as much as the sudden French collapse of the year before, and the severe winter of 1941-1942 found the Germans close to but still outside their objectives of Leningrad, Moscow, and Sebastopol. Throughout the winter the Russians counter-attacked and succeeded in winning back valuable territory.

The Far East next claimed the world's attention. On December 7, 1941, while Japanese envoys were still negotiating with the U.S.A. government, Japanese 'planes without warning bombed the American naval base at Pearl Harbour, Hawaii. Japan declared war on the British Empire at the same time and a few days later Germany and Italy declared war on the U.S.A. These events made China, which had been resisting Japanese attacks for four years, an ally of the democracies.

The Japanese made the most of their flying start. The sinking by air-attacks of H.M.S. *Repulse* and H.M.S. *Prince of Wales* confirmed their local naval superiority. They invaded Malaya and by February 15, 1942, had captured Singapore. From here they were able to seize the East Indies and invade Burma; but in May and June their naval power in the Pacific received



severe checks in the battles of the Coral Sea and Midway Island. Soon afterwards American forces began the reconquest of the Solomon Islands.

Meanwhile on the Russian front the Germans in the summer of 1942 succeeded after a long siege in capturing Sebastopol. At great cost to themselves they pushed the Russians across the River Don and reached the foothills of the Caucasus and the outskirts of Stalingrad. From August to November they strove in vain to break the stubborn defenders of Stalingrad before the dreaded Russian winter once more set in, and before the Western nations could gather their forces for a second front.

At the end of October, Britain and the U.S.A. launched an offensive in North Africa. British and Imperial forces attacked in Egypt, and as the Axis forces retreated into Libya, American troops at the other end of the Mediterranean landed at various points in French North Africa (November 8). The United Nations, so long on the defensive, had passed over to the attack. The war was entering on a new phase.

### QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Discuss in class what can be said for and against proportional representation.
2. Write notes on: Lloyd George's Irish settlement (1921-1922), the General Strike (1926), abandonment of Free Trade.
3. What events from 1925 to 1930 made the international situation its brightest during the between-war years?
4. Describe briefly the causes and results of the economic crisis (1930-1933).
5. Make a list of the political crises during the years 1933-1939.



# APPENDIX :

W = Whig; after 1868 becomes L. = Liberal  
Coa = Coalition;

	MINISTRY	DOMESTIC EVENTS	FOREIGN & IMPERIAL POLICY	OTHER COUNTRIES
1710	1710-1714 Oxford-Bolingbroke T  1714-1717 Townshend, etc. W  1717-1721 Stanhope-Sunderland W	1714-1727 George I 1715 Jacobite rebellion 1716 Septennial Act	1713 Treaty of Utrecht	1715 d. of Louis XIV
1720	1721-1742 Walpole W	1720 South Sea Bubble  1722 Wood's half-pence  1727-1760 George II		1721 Treaty of Ny-stadt
1730		1731 Jethro Tull 1733 Excise Bill withdrawn; Kay's flying shuttle  1736 Porteous riots 1737 d. of Caroline 1739 Methodist revival	1732 Georgia founded    1739 Jenkins' ear	1733-1738 War of Polish Succession
1740	1742-1744 Carteret W 1744-1754 Pelham W	1745 Jacobite rebellion 1746 Culloden	1740-1744 Anson's voyage  1743 Dettingen 1745 Fontenoy  1748 Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle	1740-1748 War of Austrian Succession
1750	1754-1756 Newcastle W 1756-1757 Pitt-Devonshire W 1757-1761 Pitt-Newcastle W	1752 Calendar reform	1751 Arcot 1755 Ft Duquesne attacked 1756 Black Hole of Calcutta; Loss of Minorca 1757 Hastenbeck; Plassey 1759 Quebec; Minden; Lagos; Quiberon Bay	1755-1756 Diplomatic Revolution 1756-1763 Seven Years' War



# TIME-CHARTS

T = Tory; after 1841 becomes C = Conservative  
Na = National; La = Labour

	MINISTRY	DOMESTIC EVENTS	FOREIGN & IMPERIAL POLICY	OTHER COUNTRIES
1760	1761-1762 Newcastle W 1762-1763 Bute T 1763-1765 Grenville W 1765-1766 Rockingham W 1766-1768 Chatham W 1768-1770 Grafton W	1760-1820 George III 1761 Bridgewater Canal 1763 <i>North Briton</i> 1765 Watt's separate condenser 1768-1769 Middlesex elections	1762 Manila captured 1763 Treaty of Paris 1765 Stamp Act 1766 Declaratory Act 1767 Townshend's duties 1768-1769 Captain Cook's Voyage	1762 <i>Social Contract</i>
1770	1770-1782 North T	1776 <i>The Wealth of Nations</i> 1779 Crompton's mule	1773 Regulating Act; Boston Tea Party 1774 Quebec Act 1776 Declaration of Independence 1777 Saratoga	1772 First Partition of Poland 1774 Treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji
1780	1782 Rockingham W 1782-1783 Shelburne W 1783 Fox-North Coa 1783-1801 Pitt T	1780 Gordon riots 1782 Grattan's Parliament 1783-1793 Pitt's financial reforms 1785 Power-loom	1781 Yorktown 1782 The Saints 1783 Treaty of Versailles 1784 Pitt's India Act 1788-1795 Trial of Hastings	1789 French Revolution
1790		1793 Arthur Youn 1795 Speenhamland; Pitt's Gaggling Acts 1798 Irish rebellion 1799 Anti-combination Law	1791 Pitt's Canada Act 1793 Britain at war with France 1794 First of June 1797 St Vincent and Camperdown 1798 Nile	1792-1797 Austria at war with France 1793 Second Partition of Poland 1795 Third Partition of Poland 1799 Napoleon First Consul
1800	1801-1804 Addington T 1804-1806 Pitt T 1806-1807 Grenville Coa 1807-1809 Portland T 1809-1812 Perceval T	1800 Act of Union 1801 First census 1807 Slave-trade abolished	1801 Baltic 1802 Treaty of Amiens 1803 War resumed 1805 Trafalgar 1807 Orders in Council 1808-1814 Peninsular War	1804 Napoleon Emperor 1805 Austerlitz 1806 Holy Roman Empire abolished; Berlin Decrees 1807 Treaty of Tilsit



	MINISTRY	DOMESTIC EVENTS	FOREIGN & IMPERIAL POLICY	OTHER COUNTRIES
1810	1812-1827 Liverpool T	1815 Corn Law 1817 Habeas Corpus suspended 1819 Peterloo; Six Acts	1812-1814 War with U.S.A.  1815 Waterloo 1816-1824 South American Republics	1812 Retreat from Moscow 1813 War of Liberation 1814-1815 Treaties of Paris and Vienna 1815-1822 Congress System
1820	1827 Canning T 1827 Goderich T 1828-1830 Wellington T	1820-1830 George IV  1822 d. of Castlereagh 1824-1825 Anti-Combination Laws repealed  1829 Catholic Emancipation	1827 Navarino	1821-1832 Greek independence.  1823 Monroe Doctrine
1830	1830-1834 Grey W  1834 Melbourne W 1834-1835 Peel T 1835-1841 Melbourne W	1830-1837 William IV 1830 Liverpool-Manchester Ry  1832 First Reform Act 1833 Factory Act, etc. 1834 Poor Law  1835 Municipal Corporations 1837-1901 Victoria 1838 People's Charter and Anti-Corn Law League	1836 Great Trek begins  1839 Belgium guaranteed; Durham Report	1830 Revolutions; Belgian independence 1830-1840 Revolts of Mehemet Ali
1840	1841-1846 Peel C  1846-1852 Russell W	1840 Penny postage 1842-1845 Free Trade budgets 1842 Mines Act 1844 Bank Charter Act 1846 Corn Laws repealed 1847 Ten Hours Act 1848 Chartist demonstration 1849 Navigation Laws repealed	1840 Treaty of Waitangi; Quadruple Alliance 1842 End of Opium War  1846 Oregon Treaty	1848-1849 Revolutions
1850	1852 Derby-Disraeli C 1852-1855 Aberdeen Coa  1855-1858 Palmerston W  1858-1859 Derby-Disraeli C 1859-1865 Palmerston W	1851 Great Exhibition  1853 Gladstone's budget 1856 Bessemer steel  1859 <i>Origin of Species</i>	1850 Don Pacifico  1854-1856 Crimean War 1856 Treaty of Paris 1857 Indian Mutiny	1852-1870 Emperor Napoleon III  1859-1860 Italian unification



	MINISTRY	DOMESTIC EVENT	FOREIGN & IMPERIAL POLICY	OTHER COUNTRIES
1860	1865-1866 Russell W 1866-1868 Derby-Disraeli C	1860 Gladstone's budget; Cobden Treaty	1861 <i>Trent</i> 1862-1864 <i>Alabama</i>	1861 Kingdom of Italy 1861-1865 American Civil War 1864 German-Danish War 1866 Prusso-Austrian (Seven Weeks') War 1867 <i>Das Kapita</i> 1869 Suez Canal
1870	1868-1874 Gladstone L	1867 Second Reform Act 1869 Irish Church dis-established	1867 Dominion of Canada	
	1874-1880 Disraeli C	1870 Elementary education 1872 Ballot Act 1875 Year of reforms 1878 Factory Act	1871-1872 <i>Alabama</i> arbitration 1875 Suez Canal shares 1876 Dual Control in Egypt 1878 Treaty of Berlin 1879 Zulu War	1870-1871 Franco-German War 1871 German Empire 1878 Congress of Berlin 1879 Dual Alliance
1880	1880-1885 Gladstone L	1881 3 F's Land Act 1884 Third Reform Act 1886 First Home Rule Bill 1888 County Councils Act 1889 Dock strike	1881 Majuba Hill 1882 Alexandria bombarded 1885 d. of Gordon 1889 Rhodesia	1882 Triple Alliance 1884 Berlin Conference on Africa 1888-1918 William II German Emperor
1890	1885-1886 Salisbury C 1886 Gladstone L 1886-1892 Salisbury C	1892-1894 Gladstone L 1894-1895 Rosebery L 1895-1902 Salisbury C	1890 Zanzibar-Helgoland 1893 Second Home Rule Bill 1894 Death Duties; District Councils 1897 Diamond Jubilee; Workmen's Compensation 1898 Omdurman; Fashoda 1899-1902 Boer War	1894 Franco-Russian Alliance 1897 von Tirpitz 1899 First Hague Conference
1900	1902-1905 Balfour C 1905-1908 Campbell-Bannerman L 1908-1915 Asquith L	1900 Labour Party founded 1901-1910 Edward VII 1903 Tariff Reform 1908 Old Age Pensions 1909 People's Budget	1900 Australian Commonwealth 1902 Anglo-Japanese Alliance 1904 Anglo-French Entente 1906 Boer self-government 1907 Anglo-Russian Entente 1909 Union of S. Africa; Morley-Minto Reforms	1904-1905 Russo-Japanese War 1906 Algeciras 1908 Bosnian crisis



	MINISTRY	DOMESTIC EVENT.	FOREIGN & IMPERIAL POLICY	OTHER COUNTRIES
1910	1915-1916 Asquith Coa 1916-1922 Lloyd George Coa	1910-1936 George V 1911 Parliament Act; National In- surance 1912-1914 Home Rule Bill  1918 Women's Vote over 30	1919 Montagu- Chelmsford Reforms	1911 Agadir crisis  1912-1913 Balkan Wars 1914 Serajevo 1914-1918 Great War  1917 Russian Revolu- tion 1919 Treaty of Ver- sailles
1920	1922-1923 Bonar Law C 1923-1924 Baldwin C 1924 MacDonald La 1924-1929 Baldwin C  1929-1931 Mac- Donald La	1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty  1926 General Strike 1928 Women's Vote over 21 1929 Local Govern- ment Reform	1925 Locarno Treaties	1921-1922 Washing- ton Confer- ence 1922 Mussolini in power  1929-1933 Economic crisis
1930	1931-1935 Mac- Donald N  1935-1937 Baldwin Na  1937-1940 N. Cham- berlain Na	1931 Gold Standard abandoned 1932 Britain abandons Free Trade  1936 Edward VIII 1936- George VI	1931 Statute of West- minster 1932 Ottawa Confer- ence  1935 Government of India Act 1936 Egyptian inde- pendence	1931 Invasion of Man- churia  1933 Hitler Chancel- lor 1935-1936 Abyssinian War  1938 Germany in- vades Austria 1938-1939 Germany invades Czecho-Slo- vakia 1939 Germany in- vades Poland; Second World War begins
1940	1940- W. S. Churchill Na		1942 Cripps mission to India	1940 Fall of France; Battle of Britain 1941 Germany attacks Russia; Japan attacks U.S.A



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